

This Old House

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A photograph of a modern living room. In the center is a light-colored, plush sofa with several pillows. In front of it is a dark wood coffee table holding a large vase of yellow flowers and a stack of books. To the left, a small wooden stool sits on the floor. In the background, a tall bookshelf is filled with books, and a framed abstract painting hangs on the wall. The floor is covered in a light-colored, textured material, likely the laminate being advertised.

Q.

A.

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JUNE 1999

special section

tool guide

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cover

Leah and Matty Beaman's throw used their own French chaise to enjoy a spring evening in Dallas. See story, p. 133. Photograph by Pamela Watson. Styling by Amy Warner.

(Continued on page 132)

SHE CAME IN FOR SOME TILE. WHAT SHE GOT WAS HER OWN BUSINESS.



The H
2499 J
A0002



Dear Mom (if you)

I still started innocently enough. A while back, I came in for some supplies and advice on installing a bathroom. But pretty soon, things got out of control.

Here's what I saw:

After getting some good advice from your associates, Russ Ceper, on this first bathroom project, I decided to do my kitchen countertop too. Brenda saw what I'd done, liked it, and asked me to do them. Well, the projects got bigger and bigger. So finally, I went and bought my own tile saw — which Russ helped me pick out and learn to use. Then I'd wanted in that, I thought, "Hey, why not do this for a living?"

So I did. Thanks to The Home Depot — and Russ as my mentor — I've gone from a mild-mannered weekend housewife to a thriving entrepreneur. Home improvement's great, but who knew you guys were into expanding horizons too? So, thanks for everything — and let's have some fun without you.

Sincerely,
Paula Lett
Paula Lett

Cute tile that just
wouldn't come out
without a tile saw

100 JAN 1 5 1993



The way I look at it,
there's no such thing as a free lunch.



not quite the same
(I'm serious, a hall which you
our ended by a gallery above it)

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all the tile
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A major
investigation

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where it all began



THE HOME DEPOT	CUSTOMER NAME	Paula Lett	
	ADDRESS	Memphis, TN	
	CONTACT PERSON	Russ Ceper	Phone # 794
	DATE	1/21/93	EXTENSION # 99-2363



"Think boats. If teak can survive the sea, it's good enough for your backyard."

—Norm Abram

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BOYS & GIRLS, P. 71

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do more

JUNE 1979

The month, photographer **JOE TURNER** (page 21) and the **Old House** seemed to require a special small, right-sized and Tom Silva. Turner shot workers as they installed shingles and cabinets in the John Hancock public way, for October (page 21), and also shot the camera at the window of a house in a wine cellar for "Best Cellars" (page 13). "There was really an effort for setting up lights in the wine cellar," Turner recalls. "Then I thought 'Why don't we go with something like a glass case that anyway! The only way, Tom has to work in low light.'" A frequent contributor to *OLD H.*, Turner was responsible for a close-up of a workman's hands that appeared in the September/October 1979 issue and named the magazine a 1979 Best Award from the Society of Publication Designers.



HIRE MEYER, an associate editor at *The Old House* and the writer of the monthly *Locusts* column, has explored such high life subjects as wine makers ("Best Cellars," page 13) and luxury homes ("Lucky's Party," April 1979). "I don't think I could collect enough wine for a cellar myself. And I'd never even thought about luxury homes before I did the story," says Meyer. "I can't afford these houses right now. But if and when I can, I'll know how to build them." Before joining the staff of the magazine, Meyer spent two years in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where she worked at an Associated Press agency and as a writer for *The Age*, a *Cross-Hatch* newspaper she now lives in Brooklyn, New York.

"I could go back there every weekend," *OLD H.* editor-in-chief **LARRY FENNERMAN** says of the Old Dutch Ranch ("Rescuing the Ranch," page 17), owned by Gail and Michael. Kasser spent a week at the so-called camp, helping to restore early 18th-century buildings as part of the U.S. Forest Service's first Historic Preservation for the public. Along the way she learned some building basics (how to hang a chain saw) and manners (why leave legs flat in the grass). "Working on a structure that's built in line with a great rope class," says Kasser. "My fellow campers and I lived in so much that we actually started complaining about there were two camp beds. Now I really understand why Nixon said 'I am sure how they do it.' Kasser recently took her new skills to Hawaii's Haleakala National Park, where she volunteered on a historic preservation project.



—Rebecca Ransier

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Placed by the Side
I posted when I saw the photo of the TCH Waterhouse House's master suite on page 12 ("White House Finishes," March 1999). Our

house, built in 1998, has the same upstairs floorboards, made of gorgeous red-orange flame-patterned wood. Can you tell us what kind of wood it is and what kind of stain or finish was used?

Don Jensen, Glenview, Ill.

The floor is made of heart pine (also known as longleaf pine) with a nice coat of oil-based polyurethane including a nice finish top coat, according to project flooring contractor Patrick West of West Mechanical Mason Inc. in Lexington, Massachusetts. "From away the 14th century, heart pine has been in demand because of its durability and the rich, reddish-pine it develops with time," West says.

"Today the tree is endangered, and it's common to replace the wood from old build-ings and reuse portions."

Worried It Is Old

As a contractor, I always find useful information published between the covers of every issue of your magazine. I am writing to commend you for the article about Jack Soren ("Free Frames," March 1999). It would be fun to participate in a project involving this style of construction. But the advertising message was that customers deserve more than textured drywall and manufactured lumber. As Soren put it, "People are starved for romance, for texture, for something real." I hope to see more articles showing the possibilities of houses built with careful craftsmanship and a willingness to display the character and charm of natural materials.

Pat Sorenson, Parkville, Mo.

Northern Exposure

I notice that when discussing historic houses in New England or other parts of the North, you never use phrases like "built with stone"

earned through shipping of stone." "Stone produced by stone masons." "Sustained with stone masonry by use of local masons" or "Sustained by masons skilled through the labor of children as masons." Why then, do you fret? I'm disgusted when describing Southern homes like Monticello ("Mighty Monticello," November/December 1997) and Malbloss ("Classical Simplicity," March 1997) to constantly dwell on phrases such as "built by stone masons," "supported by stone masonry," and "built and maintained by stone?" Please devote your coverage to the architecture and interior of houses, not to the social conditions of other times that we all dislike.

Deanna Kerner, Honolulu, Tenn.

Open-Gravel Policy

Nearly 40 years ago, a home owner on The Old House did not want kitchen floor cabinets, only large drawers. Her idea seemed so practical that I remembered it when I designed my own kitchen nine years ago. Seven years later I registered shipping the drawers. Why haven't cabinet builders picked up on this idea?

Edna G. Abramowitz, Ashland, Ore.

The Old House host Don Thomas replies: Cabinets are the default choice for ground-level storage because they cost less and hold more. But that doesn't mean home owners should feel satisfied by conventional T-G-M project houses that featured kitchen styles ranging from 1940s traditional to 1960s modernism, and so on always happy to run into new ideas. When discussing a renovation project with designers and contractors, home owners should feel free to list out their own thoughts on how to make the kitchen best fit their needs. And I think that designers instead of their cabinets are a great idea, because they eliminate the need to build and reach in awkwardly. Another alternative: Build base cabinets with drawers slide out shelves behind doors. By the way if you want to see a room that really breaks all the rules, check out "The Kitchen of the house" on page 33 in the March 1999 issue of The Old House.

La Dolce Casa

This photograph is of my grandfather's childhood home in Des Moines, California. Only



standing next to the house are "don't tell to right, my cousin Pino (the current owner), my grandfather, Tony, and me. I was using a tripod for the photo, so it's hard to see my. This Old House friend! Original construction of the house began in 1925, when Grandpa was only 7. He told me how the masons sent him into the fields to collect rocks with which to build. Everything in concrete or stone in this part of Italy—they don't use wood (or, for that matter, Alamo). At first, the house was just two rooms upstairs for sleeping and two rooms downstairs for map storage. Several remodeling jobs have taken place over the years. The old and new parts of the house contrast sharply

more, but my cousin assumes we're going to build the entire building in white stone. In case you're wondering about the barrels: The house belonged to a wine cellar and was being getting ready to make a new batch of wine.

Tom Parsons, Sycamore, Ill.

Fighting the Thump Card

Justin told us last of "Fenwick House in Andover" (Letters, January/February 1999) by Muriel Pendegast of Wrentham, Canada. She stated that England was not "built" in the War of 1812. I don't think the English troops that summed the one-sided battle of New Orleans would have agreed with her (PS: Love your magazine and PD 5 shows.)

Don Dicks, Delaware, Ohio

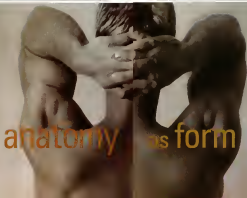
punch list

editorial or did it miss something there in reaching to be double as a construction job.

• The place under the Bay View peninsula owner M. David Miller is 107-194-2157.

May 1999

• On page 34 we described the project as a renovation of a 19th-century house. It was a 19th-century, however, we noted that it was a 19th-century. For more information on this project, contact the author, Don Dicks, at 107-194-2157.





Bolt (Back) of the Earth

We were excited to see the spring 1999 *This Old House* special collector's edition dedicated to the Milton, Massachusetts, project. The home's style is similar to that of our own home. These pictures show our Milton journey. We purchased 16 acres on the edge of Milton, Mass., in August of 1987 and broke ground for our call tree house. Working evenings and weekends, we were able to move in seven months later with the

house 95 percent complete, but no permit or occupancy (no rent between garage and house). At the end of the summer of 1998, we had a garage, and the summer is nearly finished.

Having previously lived in an old Victorian, we understood renovation projects and how trying they

can be. Building a new home, although challenging, doesn't compare to the effort involved in remodeling an older home.

SEE US AT THE BOYD YOUNG, PHOTODISC, IF

Patty Premier

Michael Shapiro's article about little known sites ("The Devil in Dime Store is Hot," April 1999) mentions a \$600 premium for a gallery. Later on, *First American Tile's* website it gives a usual good estimate of "\$2 to \$3 add-

ers per \$1,000" of the sale price. Either the subject property sold for approximately \$15,000 or there was a misprint.

DEBORAH R. THAYER, MILWAUKEE, WI

"The \$3 to \$3 per \$1,000 rate quoted is a national average," says author and real estate attorney Michael Shapiro. "In some states—particularly in New England—lower, negotiated rates are available for experienced buyers." The *Realist*, Maine, house in question paid only \$31,000 and qualified for one of those special rates.

Equal Say for Equal Work

I am a faithful reader of *This Old House*, and I have a suggestion. In the April 1998 issue, you refer to an unnamed contractor you assume will be a "he" and an unnamed structural engineer presumed to be a "he." I'm not asking you to do it every time, but please bother to "title" the plumber or "she" the contractor new and then—they really do exist out there. And it would make a difference in your female readers.

KAREN B. BERN, LOS ANGELES, CALIF.



large tear by trade and after doing projects for customers all day, worked on this project at night and on weekends. The results are in the photos—our own "designer" kitchen.

PAULA MCHUGH, MAGNETA, WASH.

Get the Word

In reference to the "A Faithful Room" story on page 50 of April 1999's *This Old House*, I would hate to have to go into that bathroom every morning and see that bathroom wallpaper. It's awful! Surely they could have come up with another pattern that truly is rustic, yet bright.

MARCO SOMMERMEYER, JENNER, ARIZ.

Double Take

Last fall, we completed a lengthy remodel and addition to our 1960s Victorian ranch house. Imagine my surprise when I opened this April's issue of *This Old House* to see the remodeled master bath pictured in "A Faithful Room." It is nearly a duplicate of our new master bath, even down to the stained cabinets, glass knobs, and tile floor laid out on the old porch. The same style works as

well in the rustic 120-year-old Victorian as it does in our California ranch.

JULIA THOMAS, MCKINNEY, TEX.

Be a People People

We received our first issue of *This Old House*, and we love it. However, I am concerned about one thing. You revealed that a writer, Geri Hinchey, has confessed her admission and lust for Norm Abram ("Am, Stevie," October, March 1998). This is the very thing that Norm's ardent fans have long worried about. Up until this point, we have had Norm to ourselves, and we like it that way. Now that Mr. Hinchey has revealed her innermost feelings, we may be forced to deal with Norm groupies—a detriment to him as well as to his regular fans.

Thank you for the excellent magazine. Although this was my first issue, it certainly won't be the last.

ROD KROGER, MONTICELLO, VA

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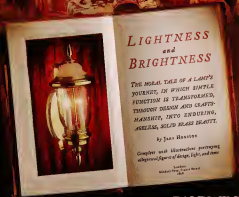


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OUTTAKES

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THIS OLD HOUSE



THIS OLD HOUSE PROJECT HOUSES ALWAYS ATTRACT ONLOOKERS. BUT IN KEY WEST, FLORIDA, NORM ABRAM WAS SURPRISED WHEN HE STEPPED OUT ON THE PORCH OF MICHAEL MILLER AND HELEN COLLEY'S COTTAGE TO FIND HIMSELF BEING GURKED AT BY 84 TOURISTS RATTLING BY IN A TROL-

TRAINING GROUND

LEY KNOWN AS THE CONCH TRAIN. HISTORIC TOURS OF AMERICA, WHICH OPERATES THE POPULAR SIGHT-SEEING EXCURSION, RECENTLY ADDED THE FLEMING STREET HOUSE TO THE 90-MINUTE LOOP AROUND TOWN. "THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF HUSTLE AND BUSTLE AROUND THE HOUSE," SAYS COMPANY SPONSORSHIP MAN PETER SMITH. "PEOPLE WANT TO BE ABLE TO GO HOME AND TELL THEIR FRIENDS THEY SAW THE SHOW'S HOUSE—EVEN IF THEY JUST CAUGHT APPLIANCES BEING DELIVERED."

REWIND: DESERT SPRING



Elizabeth Meigs, left, and her cousin Jerry swim vicariously at The Old House's Tucson project house. Caring for its conventional amenities, these pools are little water—important for desert dwellers.

AS THEY SWIM, PRACTICE CALISTHENICS, OR RUN WITH A WET-VEST. ALTHOUGH AT FIRST COLLEEN HAD TO TALK JIM INTO GETTING THE 2,500-GALLON POOL, HE'S AMORTIZED IT THE MOST, HAVING BREATHTAKED AND CRAWLED ALMOST 200 MILES SINCE ITS INSTALLATION. FOR MORE INFORMATION, TURN TO THE DIRECTORY ON PAGE 135.

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. MEIGS

A PINCH OF PLASTERBOARD

On the Key West project house, the crew recently came up short when working on a kitchen wall. All they needed was a single sheet of plasterboard—but one unit was to be found on the island. And the next shipment wasn't for a week. "We're 125 miles and 42 bridges away from the mainland," says one of the carpenters. "There are only two hardware stores here, so supply and demand becomes an issue." But the job couldn't wait. Steve and Mary were scheduled to shoot scenes in the kitchen the following day. So the workers improvised, launching a yard-sale raid in the hopes of one of architect Michael Miller's clients and "housewife" she needed pace. The kitchen named carpenter, and Michael adjusted his fee for the other client, so everybody was happy.



TOP PHOTO BY NIKKI LAMAR; LEFT PHOTO: ANITA B. ANDERSON

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NORM'S WORKSHOP MAY BE THE ENVY OF WOODWORKERS EVERYWHERE, BUT TOM SILVA'S VERSION—a VAN AND TRAILER MEASURING 43 FEET FROM BUMPER TO BUMPER—HAS TURNED THE T.O.H. CONTRACTOR INTO A TACTICAL STRIKE FORCE ON RENOVATION PROJECTS AROUND BOSTON. RECENTLY, HE OUTFITTED THE TRAILER WITH



Tom Silva's workshop trailer is his new mobile workshop.

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Inside the trailer, every piece of equipment has its place.



SILVA LINING

Quaker Silva's dog, Perry, was the only one at home when the family house burned to the ground in March 1. The 7-year-old Shetland spaniel took her slightly sagged, everyday dog was lost. The older brother of The Old Manse contractor Tom Silva and a partner in his father's business construction company, Quaker is known around his Duxbury, Massachusetts, neighborhood as an animal lover, but before the fire, he had been getting ready to rip out his garage to enlarge the family room. "When Duke brought the house 22 years ago, it was a little Corgi on half-alopes," Tom says. "From the day he moved in with the dog, the house was gone for me, working on it." Maybe Duke's unlikable living in a powder with his wife and two daughters, and get some help from the extended family—the twins in L.O.H.—which is now helping rebuild the house for the full project.

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robot-weld it together for flock of Gibraltar stability. It's also why we make the work surfaces, condiment holders and hood handles out of stainless steel. And to ensure our grill hoods will never rust, fade or peel, we use a porcelain-enamel finish on all 1600°F. The ordinary enamel used by most grill manufacturers looks good new but quickly breaks down and burns off.

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A grill should also be versatile enough to handle anything from hamburgers for two to prime rib for 20. Not to mention cook directly or indirectly, smoke slowly or sear quickly. So under the Flavorizer bars, we put four to six stainless steel burners. This way

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HOUSE CALLS WITH STEVE

Mapping out a solution to bathroom traffic jams

BY STEVE THOMAS



Sherlock Holmes might call this chapter of House Calls "The Case of the Hidden Agenda." Even though we were at Mark and Tina Sills' West Hartford, Connecticut, home to discuss reimagining their family bathroom, the conversation kept veering systematically off to other areas entirely: the attic, the study, the master bedroom. It wasn't until almost the end of my visit that I understood why.

When the Sills and their three sons—ages 6, 10, and 14—collocated to New England from Decatur, Georgia, three years ago, they had had it with the South's firm Colocalists. They wanted a house that was genuinely old. After a whirlwind renovation across North, they came upon a charming 19th-century Federal Revival with handsome details. The front half was built in the 1830s and a rear addition in the early part of the century, resulting in a series of connected rooms that go from formal (in front) to funky (in back). The house needed some tender loving care, but it was "love at first sight," says Tina.

To get warmed up for an action of restorative therapy, we began downstairs in an area renovated in 1993 by wife and husband design duo (and sons) Lindsay Karl and Michael Canaan. The new space includes a mudroom, breakfast area, kitchen, and full bath. The design is crisp and

1990. Steve Thomas consults with Mark and Tina Sills about upgrading the family bathroom. (Clockwise from top left) The Sills' long-term renovation; a visit to the new Federal Revival house; a visit to the new bathroom and reworking the attic.

Get a problematic kitchen or bath? Tell The Old House crew Steve Thomas. He'll visit a reader's home to help you help you make a renovation plan. Send details—including photos, budget, and your house—in "House Calls With Steve." The Old House magazine, 1145 Avenue of the Americas, 23rd floor, New York, NY 10019.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN KERNICK

straightforward, the work on the job site and, best of all, the job was accomplished on time and within budget. With this successful experience behind them, the Silks were ready to realize the house's next major remodel spot: a half-way bath upstairs.

There are actually two bedrooms upstairs. One is off the younger son's bedroom and is pegged exclusively for him. The master bedroom has no bathroom, so Mark and Tanya must share the centrally located full bath with their other two sons.

The contiguous bedrooms also have a few Victorian-era shenanigans, including a pedestal sink, pedestal toilet, and claw-foot tub. (Tanya loves the tub, the boys don't, referring to it as "that old thing.") The floor-mounted shower stall, however, is inadequate and out of place. Despite two double-hung windows, the room has poor ventilation, spawning a smoggy field of mildew on the ceiling. Tanya even found a large mushroom growing next to the shower vent opening.

The Silks and I talked through three options: 1) Split the bath-



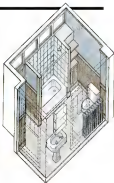
LEFT: Inside the bedroom's tiny front entry, not abundant natural light, an old shower stall and poor vent it runs lead to excessive outdoor moisture. The cramped tub and shower arrangement strains off-the-mass production.

room into two, one with a bath, the other with a shower. 2) Convert the closet in the current master bedroom into a narrow bathroom tucked under the stair case. 3) Join the bedroom with the no more bath into the master bedroom. But in each scenario, solving one problem created a host of new ones, ultimately leaving our room or another shortchanged.

We decided that the best solution would be to retain the upstairs bath for the kids and create a new master bath for the parents.

FLOOR PLAN

The Silks want to minimize plumbing changes, so the main structural improvement will be to scrap the old shower stall for a new tiled bathtub and shower. A linen closet and storage unit will replace the claw-foot tub, which the kids never appreciated and is slated to go into a future master bedroom.



COURTESY OF THE SILKS

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ASK NORM

"There's no need to bother with a roof that isn't bothering you."

KEEP THE HEAT

Here's a problem we've been trying to solve for 77 years: Our two old stone fireplaces are losing air for combustion and pull too much heat out of the house. We want to use air vents to supply heat but have been told by "experts"—architects, chimney sweeps, fireplace dealers, and windowless—in put in a fireplace insert. But that also runs heat out. You are our last hope. (Talk about present!)
—Loren and Dan Coleman, New Can, N.Y.



Present? Not if you're here able to wait 27 years. I'd recommend a fireplace insert, too, with glass doors to minimize the outflow of house air. If you don't want any smoke air going up the flue, you could install an external vent through the back of the fireplace. However, cutting an opening through fieldstone will be a long, hard job, and you'll still need glass doors to face the fire to close air through the vent.

PIPE GRIPE

We need advice on covering radiators and the vertical steam pipes running between floors. We like their heat but not their looks.
—Mikea Schwartz, Baltimore, Md.

The radiator can hide behind simple enclosures with full-width openings at the bottom and the top for air circulation. Enclosures can be custom- or ready-made of metal, which radiators heat well, or with an MDF frame and painted metal grille. Cover pipes in the corners of a room with a stud-and-drywall box, or else, brace those next to windows behind heat-exchange curtains.

TANTRIC THRAP

I've seen episodes of *The Old House* showing beautiful old homes with high-quality wood surrounding a patch of cheap wall that is meant to be covered by an area rug. Now I'm looking to install a pre-finished master-bedroom floor and I wonder whether I can do the same thing: boards my area rug. After all, aren't we have good old Yankee ingenuity in the 1990s?
—Loren and Dan Coleman, New Can, N.Y.

Yes, we can. All it takes is a layer of plywood or Homosote under the rug wall-go. Two things to keep in mind: 1) Rugs

floating floors, you need to leave an expansion gap around the perimeter of the room. 2) This approach limits decorating options, and may affect the resale value of your home.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Dear response regarding "hideous peeling" in a big house or right my eye, and I'd like to add a word of warning: Not all peeling is created equal. Every once in a while, original peeling will come up with, when it does, it can be more worthy of display than the legs themselves. I once worked on my 1946 log cabin with solid poplar paneling 14 inches wide.

—Charles J. Williams, Louisville, Ky.

Good point, but original solid-wood paneling is as rare as log cabins; there's little risk of mistaking it for junk paneling, which comes in 4x4 sheets and is as close as it comes to being solid. Offer generous vertical scoring (as attempt to provide texture and hide joints) and a cheap surface of wood veneer or of paper with an unconvincing wood-grain print.

SHOCKING DEVELOPMENT

My wife and I purchased a 102-year-old Victorian during its renovation year, and now we're settling into a maintenance program. We have already replaced the cast-iron boiler with a high-efficiency natural-gas unit. We'd like to re-roof, but both just as aesthetic issues—the roof is in good shape. So now we're looking at the electrical service. We have one 60-amp fuse box and want to upgrade to 200 amps with breakers. What should I look for as an indication that the wiring in the house needs to be replaced? Also, the woodwork has never been painted, and we really like the deep red patina the finish has taken on, but notice warbling in these things we can do to smooth them out and save the finish?

—Mark D. Brinkley, Greenwich, Ind.

Good job on upgrading the important work from your renovation; there's no need to breathe with a roof that isn't bothering you. If your finish is scratched, you either have varnish, which will have to be stripped, or shellac, which can sometimes be rubbed smooth with alcohol. Your wiring shouldn't be worth a problem, even if it's the old-fashioned knob-and-tube type. It doesn't need replacing unless it's been so heavily overloaded



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that the insulation falls apart in your hand. Electrical contractor Allen Giffert applauds your move to 200-watt service ("Welcome to the 20th century," he says). He suggests putting new wiring in the kitchen and laundry room for the heavy-load appliances, and to run under within 6 feet of a tub or shower. These outlets can then get ground-fault protection, which he calls "the best invention of the last 50 years."

IN SEARCH OF SALVAGE

My friend is building a house and would like to incorporate some old architectural details into it, so we're planning a trip to New England in look for salvaged goods. Can you provide us with some ideas?

HAZEN HENNE, Cranford, NJ

These yards aren't hidden. They're often tourist attractions whose names are mentioned in guidebooks and brochures or scribbled through local chambers of commerce. But I know to say, just because it's New England, you shouldn't expect a treasure of genuine antiques. The best stock is tucked up in a flask, and the rest is often poorly stored or damaged by some bo-

grade removal. And if you happen upon a fabulous find, it probably won't be cheap. Tool operators are real house hunters. You see a diamond saw, paint-covered old mallets; they are the final jewel of your living room, and change you when they check you're good for dressing down when a find shows they know what's local and what is, as New Englanders say, "from away." I don't mean to sound like some country Yankee promoting his province—The Old House encourages reuse of old material—but I do want you to be realistic. My advice: Pick a piece, take your time, and enjoy the hunt, whether you find anything or not.

BIG PLANS

My cat and I share a new old house, a 120-year-old two-story shingled Victorian with a square tower for a third floor. It's beautiful but badly neglected. I've begun working on an extensive oil, modeled but nothing. I plan to participate in all phases of the renovation. Here's my wish list. Rebuild most of the porch. Replace the garage, repair the oil, and shore up beams from the Yankee cellar and crawl space. Replace the current living system with a gas fired, hot water heat-boiler system. Tear down the two bedrooms and replace it with a sun-eat garage, with workshop and storage area. Expand the kitchen. Redesign the first floor bath and laundry. Add a second floor bath and a third floor half bath. Tear down the second-floor walls and redesign the floor plan to provide two bedrooms and clean space. Remove back chimney, converting one to a dormer-style. Paint exterior trim,

level the sidewalks, landscape the grounds, and add back and vegetable garden. Another is enormous sign of relief and satisfaction, then move in. What do you think?

SIMONEE ANN GALT, Ocean Grove, NJ

There must be some cat, if you need all that house for the two of you. But it sounds as if you have a marvelous project here. I notice you don't say much about infrastructure. Before proceeding, be sure your roof and plumbing don't hold any surprises, and more all repairs and shoring up beams to the top of your job list. You want to work on a sound structure.

Deliver, it's a good idea to update from the ground up—such as test all new heating, plumbing, and wiring—and do the finish work from the top down. This way, you don't have contractors dragging their stuff through your finished rooms. It's good that you're working with an architect, but I'd recommend that you compare his estimate with your contractor's. If the two aren't close, you need to settle that issue early.

I think it's great that you want to become involved in the renovation, but I urge you to be realistic about what you can do. No offense, but during a full-scale renovation, when lots of jobs are going simultaneously, unskilled labor seldom saves money and often wastes some by getting in the way of skilled tradesmen. Creating a beautiful, productive back and vegetable garden might be a better place to apply yourself. It sounds much more appealing to me.

LONG-DISTANCE REMODEL

My wife and I just bought a nice 1795 Colonial in Torrington, Vermont. Although the house has been updated, we would like to remodel. Can you recommend contractors of various trades, including carpentry, heating, roofing, windows, etc.?

JEFFREY A. VELAZQUEZ, Denver, Colo.

If you use all the referrals I've asked for I wouldn't be here to ask, let alone work. And it wouldn't be for Craftsman I know and expect would get us many calls they'd have to supply the phone. Meanwhile, for Craftsman I've never met would be ignored just because I don't recommend them.

Whether you do a renovation later or spread the job over many months (so you can pitch in and build some recent equity), you'll need a good general contractor to handle everything. He or she should be able to find the specialist tradesmen you desire and to oversee their work.

Send questions to Ask Norm, 200 Oak Street, Cranford, NJ 07016.

Photo courtesy of the American Old House Society.

Include a complete address and telephone number. Publication details will be subject to change and might also appear in other media.

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TIME WARNER

FINANCES



Winter Cash From Summer Stock

Making vacation homes pay in the off-season

Over the past 10 years, Michael Baserman has bought and sold 15 houses in the Hamptons, which are among the most in-demand summer vacation destinations on Long Island, New York. With their white sand beaches and quaint villages, East, West, and Southampton draw huge sums of money every month, and Baserman has long made good money from renters who leave from Memorial Day to Labor Day. But during the winter, when the sun worshippers were gone, Baserman's rental income would always plummet. Faced with a financial pinch, he started looking for ways to reel in more off-season revenue and, when some tried and failed, found them in leasing temples and well-decorated rooms.

BY MICHAEL SHAPIRO

"Everybody who stays in the winter wants a fireplace," says Baserman, who now makes sure that fireplaces are looking whenever prospective tenants visit. "I started to get away from the office," he adds, "I take down pictures of the relatives, get rid of clutter to make a house more bright, and put a pot of geraniums on the table." What Baserman calls his "pop-tricks" have made the difference. Now warm, dry, and smiling, his houses are well even during season Long Island's cold, desolate winter.

For people who own—or dream of owning—a vacation house, rental income can make the difference between affordability and impossibility. And in Baserman's found, there may be a strong potential for increasing the take during the off-season with smart marketing or even some simple remodeling that gives a house year-round appeal. Leslie Kopp has been selling houses in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, for more than 10 years and has seen the

ILLUSTRATION BY JARON SCHNEIDER

season season steadily expand. "Week-end rentals have extended the busy June to September period day into the winter months," she says. One of Kopp's off-season strategies is to attract groups of schoolmates. But such also serve here the right atmosphere can boost rent of money. While some homes already have fireplace and can be lived in comfortably all year, Kopp says that means are also winterizing older homes. "Floors, walls, and pipes are being insulated, and double-pane windows are replacing single-pane units," she says. Kopp also suggests installing portable gas fireplaces in a leaseless house. "They require no gas, less expensive than wood-burning stoves," she says.

Colleen Cooper, a broker in Lake Tahoe, says the houses she rents in summer and winter were three times as all spring and fall—and the rental premium she sees as a post-season discount. She makes sure to tell the "Tahoe chase" her house is ready with three A-frame architecture, pine flooring, and three rock fireplaces. But she also is a great selling point. "Two of you haven't worked up a sweat on the trails, there's nothing like jumping into a hot tub surrounded by beautiful scenery," she says.

Renting in the off-season takes more work, but it can produce decent money

To make renters during the winter off-seasons historical vacation homes in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Charles Payton, markets sometimes more expensive available for the rent. "Like home rentals in many parts of Europe and Mexico, we provide daily meal and valet service, grocery shopping, help with maintenance for dishes, the school, or horseback riding, and a continental breakfast," Payton says. Besides these perks, he's always made sure to buy homes that had strong architectural and historical appeal. "They're all built out of adobe, and some are 180 years old."

But like Cooper, Payton also markets his vacation homes to people who normally wouldn't be interested in them. In the New Mexico winter, the slow season coincides with the period in which the state legislature meets. "Many brokers send us legislators and lobbyists looking for something bigger than a hotel room."

Home owners who already live in prime vacation areas can take advantage of the opposite opportunity: their house's rental potential during the high season. David and Helene Sullivan have been doing just that for four years with their farmhouse in Stoner, Wisconsin. When guests occur during winter holidays, they rent the place for peak-season rates. "A lot of residents do it," says David.

"We've visited relatives in New York and taken our sons to visit our grandparents in Sweden, all paid for by the rent of income." He also promotes the area's off-season attractions by showing drives home each time to do after the snow melts. If they like the area, he means, they might want to come back for hiking, biking, canoeing and other activities. "I put out a packet of brochures in the kitchen and provide dry passes to state parks," he says.

Sullivan, who builds reproductions of traditional-style houses, also uses a more toward reconfiguring large houses to create a more cozy with a primary residence. That way the owners don't have

to vacate for months and can still charge top rent while being around to keep an eye on things. "Some people rent out the downstairs and live upstairs, while others divide their house down the middle," he says. Some townships may require special permits to subdivide one-family houses into two-family rentals, so a rent to Three Fall is a small purchase before becoming a live-in landlord.

Compared to high-season rental, getting people to come during other times of the year can take more work. But, even though rates are usually lower because of reduced demand, there is still decent money to be made. David Sullivan says that all season

rents in Stoner are just slightly lower than they are during peak season, Charles Payton says his prices don't really fall much at all. Colleen Cooper's Lake Tahoe rentals take a bigger hit, dropping from \$900 a night in winter and summer to just \$200 through spring and fall, but she still finds the income worth the effort. Michael Brummetts says that in the Harpers—decidedly undesirable during the off-season—a house that rented for \$10,000 a month in July or August will fetch only \$2,000 in November. Yet even at the lower rate, the added income still far exceeds the bottom line. ■

Tenants and Taxes

Under the ever-misleading eyes of the Internal Revenue Service, making out a vacation house requires careful accounting of income and expenses and a precise understanding of which deductions are and aren't allowed. The I.R.S.'s definition of a house as either a personal dwelling or a rental unit determines whether expenses and depreciation can be deducted.

The I.R.S. says an owner can't claim expense deductions if the house is used for personal purposes for more than either business days or ten percent of the total days it is rented to others, whichever is greater. "Personal" use includes rental by anyone for less than fair market value and any arrangement that lets the owner live in a part of the house.

There are enough other nuances and subtleties in the I.R.S. rule book to prove why we need tax accountants, but if a house owner all the applicable hurdles, then rental expenses and depreciation can be deducted. In some cases, these write-offs can exceed rental income, but when a loss is claimed, the I.R.S. forbids that, unless expenses and depreciation don't necessarily test. They can be carried over and used to offset future rental year's loss.



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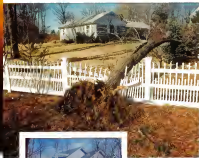


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U P K E E P

Mending Fences

Don't let a fallen tree or unstoppable rot stump you. Fixing damaged pickets, posts, and rails won't take much time or toil



Mike Sladock wasn't expecting to receive this fence anytime soon. But less than a year after installing an acre's worth of pickets and posts around a new Cape in Whitport, Conn. retreat, he's back for a little fence doctoring in the aftermath of a natural disaster. An early spring ice storm uprooted an 80-year-old sugar maple, which crashed in eight-foot sections, split open two posts and crushed up the neighbor's yard. After the man from the tree service reduced the trunk to short rounds and the branches to a truckload of chips, it was up to Sladock to lend the picket an otherwise unblemished run of white wood order.



Sladock's fence has client and a local maple crashing down onto it last week. (Left) Once the tree was removed, the fence was ready to go as well as picket fence.

Woodworkers' Homeowners often discover that, after years of solid service, the noticeable process of decay (which can be slowed, if not stopped) on "Post-and-rail" has caused their fence posts wobbly and their rails weak. But whatever causes a fence's demise, fixing the fence is a simple endeavor.

As Sladock assesses the damage, he gauges, Danny King, represents the local rail and picket from the upland post. Then Sladock takes a post back and forth to widen the hole, which allows him to work on the 6-foot-long rail with less effort. After clearing away the damaged ground, King stretches a new rail line across the gap to guide him in placing the new post. When the new rail is knotted the whole section out of alignment, he says, "and you can't trust the hole." To place

BY JOSEPH BURST WAJRCZUK

TOP PHOTO: JIM BLAIRE

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Best Cellars

Creating a good home for fine wine

BY HOPE BEEVER

Andrew Rapp developed a taste for wine as a teenager. Raised in Poland, he traveled with his father to Italy at 14 and to France at 16, eating as many vineyards as they could squeeze into a summer's holiday. "My father was a real connoisseur," Rapp says. "He loved to taste wine and wanted to track the wine's appreciation." Rapp moved to the United States in 1981, went to school, and began his collection nine years later, starting with a gift for his son: "I bought a bottle of 1993 Marston because that was the year Marston was born," Rapp says. "It will be here for him when he turns 25."

"Here" is the wine cellar in the basement of Rapp's Brooklyn, New York, brownstone, where he safeguards Marston's inheritance—as well as his own 1,600-bottle collection. The basement, with its arched doorways, brick walls, and limestone floor, feels like a 19th-century cellar even before room renovations began. Says Rapp, "We built a wall and outlaid the space with the railroad racks, but everything else is organic." Everything, in fact, that is. He added a wine-friendly climate-control system, led-based ultraviolet rays to keep the corking and waxing, and the polyethylene vapor barrier to maintain ideal conditions day and night. The cellar is even equipped with an alarm. "No, not for the police," says Rapp with a laugh. "It's for us—so we can save the wine if the cooling machine breaks down."

That's the way oenophiles talk about it, as if wine were a beloved child rather than a bottle of fermenting juice. Indeed, children have a lot in common with



wine. All a young wine wants is a cool, dark, damp place to grow slowly age. But people want more, too. The pointed dark archways, the reduced noise, and rough limestone floor like those in Andrew Rapp's basement wine cellar help enhance the effect.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC PIASCONE



An underground wine fridge isn't meant for aging fine wine but, for temporary storage in a kitchen or cell has at least built-in benefits: down to the cellar. This unit has tinted glass to block light and three temperature zones for red, one for white, and one for sparkling wines.

Kramer makes a business out of turning ordinary domestic spaces—garages, spare rooms, coat closets, you name it—into wine cellars. The first involves the room with R-19 fiberglass bats before laying down a 6-mil polyethylene vapor barrier. Over the barrier goes a heavy-duty vinyl-glass board. After the door is tightly weather-stopped, Kramer installs the all-important cooling unit, which removes less humidity than standard air-conditioning. In due season, a bowl of water on the cellar floor may be necessary to keep the space damp enough. Luckily for Andrew Rapp, his basement needs no such assistance. "I can practically feel the rain here," says Rapp. "It's wonderful."



Changed to a countertop, an "acoustic machine," popular in restaurants and bars, makes short work of stubborn corks. One swing of the metal banded handle cracks the cork, so the backswing, the cork is pulled out and ejected.

But young wines (not to be confused with those that are newly-so-drink). Both mature fine in a stable environment after years of patient dedication and, some say, when you've had a bit too much of them, back can give you a headache. But if you attend to their needs, they'll reward your efforts.

When it comes to raising wine (not kids), there needs not have a temperature between a 50 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit (winos) don't say. Fine and acclimated aging, a humidity level between 60 and 70 percent (so the cork can swell), and non-darkness (no light can "cook" the wine and make it taste far anything but aged). In other words, the ideal cellar should be just like a dark cave. Experts were against makeshift solutions for collectors who need aging. Refrigerators are too cold, too dry, and shake the bottles—vibration can also rob a wine of finesse—and racks in a closet are too warm and too dry. "Wine isn't like soda or beer," says Kathleen Kramer, founder of the Five Star Lane, a Somers, Arizona-based distributor of wine paraphernalia. "You can take a wonderful bottle and simply by storing it in the wrong place."



TOM BUILDS A DREAM

Scott Wilson had dreamed of his new wine cellar ever since he took a wine appreciation course at Cornell University's Hotel School 30 years ago. Last year, having amassed some 300 bottles, he was ready to break ground—except he didn't have any ground to break. So, Wilson convinced his parents to donate a corner of their 180-year-old home in Litchfield, Massachusetts, and quickly hired Tom to build the cellar. Construction "was slow to turn it into a one-flavor business."

Tom first put down a 10-inch pane of wooden studs, coated it with plastic sheathing, and lined them (Larry Sullivan to lay a brick floor and build an arched brick doorway. Tom then framed, sheetrocked and foam-insulated the 10-by-16-foot room. To give it a rustic feel, he textured masonry to the ceiling and applied a rough coat of concrete plaster to walls and ceiling, above. "I wanted it to look like it's always been here," he says. Finally, he put in the cooling system (to hold temperatures to a consistent 55 degrees) and sealed the ceiling with a heavy-duty seal that looks just like a brick wall. Total cost for the project, including enough steel reinforcement to hold 1,000 bottles: approximately \$10,000. "This cellar will be full in no time," says an enthusiastic Wilson. "Good 'ol me looking for space to put in another one."

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P R E S E R V A T I O N

1909. Former wrangler and UTO founder Dick Randall, standing near the main lodge's fireplace, explains plans with years of sawhays and grizzlies. MUSE: Historic preservation specialist Bruce West guides demonstrators down to watch a "green check," a replacement for the ranch's guest cabins.



Rescuing the Ranch

Volunteers restore historic log cabins in the Montana wilderness

BY LAURA FISHER KAISER

I drove myself against the inside of a landing backboard pulled by a plodding pair of massive English draft horses. The road is rough, the springs are stiff, my butt hurts, and still I can't believe my luck. Yesterday, I was home, suffering in the boondocks of New York City. Now in true 19th-century style, I'm heading into the wild hill country of Montana, just north of Yellowstone. With each jounce of the wagon, each breath of September-scented air, each glimpse of jagged peaks etched against an azure blue sky, the grip of wilderness life looses and I fall under the spell of this spectacular landscape.

Joining me on this ride are two women and four men, aged 18 to 65, volunteers in a special Heritage Expedition trip organized by the U.S. Forest Service. We're tasked with keyboard-tapping volunteer jobs for a week of hard labor restoring the historic UTO Dude Ranch. Never mind that I barely know an axe from a shagging butcher—by week's end, that day choker will be shagging cords, snatching logs, and swinging an axe as well as my good ol' job.

As the wagon passes under an aging, rusty UTO sign, we get our first glimpse of the ranch: a sprawling main lodge and 10 rustic guest cabins nestled in a clearing between the toes of a forest creek. Dick Randall, a former stagecoach driver, founded the UTO in 1912. He made it an exclusive playground for tycoon and adventurer willing to pay \$60 a week for the privilege of living like vaqueros. Randall persuaded his guests—including Teddy Roosevelt—that they'd "leave our dudes and leave cowboys." Many of them returned year after year to repeat the transformation. "We, after you've spent a month on a Montana ranch, riding horseback every day and living outdoors, and you don't feel better," Randall said, "you don't send a doctor, you send an undertaker and there's no hope for you."

Randall died in 1957, and the ranch was abandoned





to roadside and the elements. The Forest Service took over the crumbling buildings in 1991, but it wasn't until last year that they started paying volunteers to restore the OVO. When all the work is done, the public will be able to visit the cabins or stay in the eight-room main lodge and learn the ways of the old West, just as Randall intended.

We'll climb down from the backboard and meet expedition leader Bernie Wengert, a historic preservation specialist with the Forest Service and an occasional guest on *The Old House*. Looking like a cross between Indiana Jones and Koa Kagle, with his white whiskers, worn rim glasses, suspenders, and *fringe* hat, he gives us the tour. The main lodge, striped but intact, has an ugly asphalt shingle roof. The cabins look like boxes on a heap, their cedar shingle roofs weather-beaten and rotting. In some spots, only moss seems to be keeping out the rain.

Wengert's flag opens a log to reveal poles at the top. In several spots, the blade sinks in to his hip. He shakes his head. "Looks like we're going to need to replace some old logs and a spangled or two," he says in a John Wayne cadence. Setting our blades aside, he explains that all logs are the cabin's heart and that spiders are twisted legs lying across them. "If you look under here, you can see why these cabins are in such awful shape—there's no foundation!" We all look. The only thing supporting the logs are a few rock piers.

Half the group breathes over to attack the rot on another cabin; the rest of us work on the wall. With hands and shovels, we dig a trench beside the rotting log. Grunting and screaming, we push and pull until one boulder and three ancient corner-plank fasciae craters in to prop up the structure with screw jacks and cribbing. We work on the crawling log, and everyone cheers.

Generally speaking, Wengert's not a fan of power tools, nothing at all averse to his axe as the sound of concert saws and lawnmowers. But, on occasion, he concedes, a little "chain-saw is an expensive" is unavoidable. After a lesson on how to handle the smoking tool, I head off and trim the roof of a replacement log—"green sticks," Wengert calls them. When I'm done, I feel like I could trim the whole forest by myself.

By the end of each day, we're coated with dirt, sweat, and pine needles. Like herons in the barn, we loiter near toward the on-don showers. A dead engine, cranking out no-no-nothing 706/200

ATV. Deer Park leads a baggage-pulling mule team under the ramshackle sign. Randall and the others "GTO" important hawkeye scouts and an entire-the skeleton of a writer's wagon for once found nearby.



The rustic 80-year-old guest cabins suffer from rotting roofs and logs.



To put the cabin back on a firm footing, volunteers dig out a rotting log.



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Clean Machine

High-powered central vacuum systems make light work of a dull chore

BY GUSTAV NIST

S

ince Klara always thought her 94-year-old brick Victorian was as close to perfection, but in two flashes of stars made cleaning something of a chore. "I tried for years to find a housekeeper," says Klara. "But as soon as they asked they'd have to leave a vacuum cleaner up and down all day, they'd break things or not do it." Klara and her husband, Fred, stayed busy with the idea of buying a vacuum for each floor of their Denver home, "but the idea of owning three machines seemed ridiculous."

So they decided to install a whole house vacuum, an appliance that sucks dirt through hidden 2-inch pipes down to a 12-gallon canister in the basement. Now, instead of maneuvering a heavy, noisy portable, they simply plug a lightweight, 30-foot hose into special wall outlets, which automatically start the vac's two motors. The system has a 145-cubic-foot-per-minute capacity—two or three times that of a portable—and no dust spreading exhaust. "We love it," says Paul Kier, "and I never expected to say that about a vacuum cleaner."

The idea of using a wall-plumbing to clean houses goes back to the 1850s in Sweden, where horse-powered fans created the vacuum. Eventually, horses were replaced by vacuum who rather pumped power bel lows as, in later years, pedaled machinery bicycles. Even when electric vacuums arrived in the turn of the century, these systems were only modest cranks of wealthy mansions like Henry Ford and George Eastman. These portable vacuums cleaned for the market in the 1920s, and their whole house cousins were left in the dust.

But central vacuum systems weren't forgotten entirely. Frank Lloyd Wright, impressed by their cleaner-line convenience, specified them as a matter of his later designs. The systems became more affordable in the late 1950s when plastic pipe began to replace copper, but they didn't really come into their own until the 1990s, when growing house sizes and concerns about indoor air quality connected work improved life.



ILLUSTRATION BY GARY NOVLAN



Crumbs creep into the mouth of a power cleaner (which is mounted back with the floor) disappear at the touch of a button.



A soft white neck protects woodwork as the hose is dragged from room to room.

Filter Pools

In the world of central vacuums, there are three ways to collect the dirt. Spin the air in the collector so that the dirt hits the bottom and the dust blows outside the house (the cyclonic spinners put inertial filters at the top of the collector to snag dust but allow dirt to drop down), or suck dirt and dust into a disposable paper bag (right), much like a portable vacuum. Machines with inertial filters or bags can exhaust either outside or to one place you don't want dirt (a toilet) to inside a central-vacuum system; even the so-called lifetime cyclonic ones with screens or filters to probe of their makers from dust. "Before buying any system, take a close look at how easy it is to remove and clean all the filters," says Peter Privalik of Aerolab, a motor manufacturer. "If you don't keep them clean, the motors will burn out sooner."



ations, more powerful motors and more effective vac attachments.

In Canada and elsewhere, most new houses are plumbed for central vacs, yet in this country they remain something of a novelty, in part because of their steep initial cost. The Klars paid about \$1,100 for their system, including installation. On the other hand, it comes with a 5-year warranty, for most parts, it's fairly new gear. "You're dealing with a bigger motor, which runs a lot longer than the smaller ones in portable vacuums," says Peter Privalik of Aerolab, which makes most of the central vacuum motors in this country.

But big motors create some unexpected problems. "You have to be careful because things you don't expect will go right down it," says Grant Olester of M. D. Manufacturing in Bakersfield, California. "I've had people vacuuming out a bird or a pig."

Two clues to the lead: In addition to the occasional "shredded rosette," there are numerous tales of kids trying to clean things—water out of a toilet, a broken jar of jelly—that damage the unit. (These parents should have gotten an optional way-vac attach ment that stops gley from reaching the pump.)

Finally, there's the eternal noise. "If you're standing next to the motor, it can sound like a jet taking off," says Jon Nagg, who installed the Klars' system. Their model is engineered to be quiet, mufflers can be added on others if necessary. At the caride test, however, noise is minimal or silent. The Klars' old portable used to read their yellow Lab into hysterics, but now Sonda can vacuum around the sleeping dog without waking it.

Most people think central vacs are only for new houses, but they can be retrofitted to older residences, at the Klars can attest. "With these babies, where there's a wall, there's a way," says Nagg. He and his work crew spent one long weekend making about 100 feet of PVC pipe through walls, mounting the hose outlet covers, and connecting the low-voltage wires that signal the motor when to start and stop. The camera still took only 20 minutes to hang on the basement wall. Then Nagg simply plugged in and into an electric outlet.

"I worried about the house being torn apart during the installation, but except for one short wall where the pipe thins, there really wasn't any damage at all," says Nagg. Now she can clean two flights of stairs at a time. Maintenance on the unit is easy, too—Nagg demonstrates disposing of the paper filter bag every six months and changing the motor brushes every three years. And although he's still looking for domestic help, his own housekeeper won't necessarily have to vacuum. "I'm actually having fun doing it myself," she says. ■

How Does It Work?

"When I install a central vacuum, I always put a hose outlet in the garage so people can clean their cars."



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A Splash of Style

A swimming pool that's low on looks can be filled with natural beauty

BY CURTIS NISBET

A backyard pool can be the perfect oasis on a hot summer day, but when the old swimming hole shows its age or falls short on style, it can throw cold water on an otherwise luscious landscape. Most often this is true, as ground pools are sterile looking, and their peculiar aqua tint, hard rectangular shape, and stark concrete edging make them more appropriate for the local Y than for a beautiful yard. "They're great for cooling off, but they can be ugly, really hideous," says Madison, Connecticut-based architect Don Dickinson.

Yet just like a cooler under your house, a less-than-beautiful pool can be renovated and turned into something for lovelies. Pool designs gain through fashions, and today the aqua-and-concrete look is in disfavor as its father Williams says. Instead, designers are turning to what they call naturalistic designs—making a pool look more like a man-made pond, with stone edging and a darker, more shimmering glimmer to the water. And while pools may seem utterly nondescript and unchangeable, they're actually quite malleable. A perfect little rectangular shape can be changed by knocking out and rebuilding walls, steps can be added or altered to make them more graceful and accessible, and decorative edging can replace plain concrete. "A pool is literally just a hole in the ground," says Dickinson. "It's not hard to spruce it up by going out of all those '90s materials and putting in '90s materials."

Along with working on the pool itself, improving the overall scene can also include changing the landscaping or even adding a feature that makes the pool look like a serene or whimsical waterfall. "Whenever possible, I try to make the pool look like a gem of nature," says architect Robert A. M. Stern. But he cautions against getting carried away and compensating a pool's functional-ity. "If you want to swim laps, you'll have a hard time doing that in a pool shaped like an anemone,



Although structurally sound, the owner of this pool in Palmdale, California, said that it "didn't have enough atmosphere," says Bruce Riley, a local pool designer. They wanted a garden-like look, so Riley replaced the plain concrete coping and deck around the pool's edge with concrete that was hand and textured to resemble stone—a makeover that took about a month. "It was a natural material, but it sure looks that way," he says.



When the owners of this pool in Tucson, Arizona, called in landscape designer Carl Giger, they said how they wanted "big, bold, show, like a canyon," he says. His first step was to tear out some of the walls and some of the coping of the pool, which reduced the pool's size by about 25 percent. Then he built a raised spa, lined everything with a polished finish, and raised the edge with walls almost to create the look of a stone rim.

with a waterfall dumping on your head," he says. Giger prefers to work with naturalistic geometric shapes and subtle colors and is especially fond of raising the walls gray so that the water "looks better, it has the color of a clear brook." For the deck—the walkway that surrounds the pool—Giger opts for natural materials such as bluestone, slate, or even grass growing up to the edge.

Changes such as these can easily be incorporated into existing pools, especially ones made of concrete rather than those with vinyl or fiberglass liners, which would have to be completely replaced. Pool experts say the most popular makeover involves painting the walls and floor either white (which creates a Caribbean-blue color when it reflects the sky), black (for a pond-like look), or the gray that liners prefer (for a more subdued look). Another popular finish involves applying a layer of polished concrete, which is durable as well as good-looking.

For Giger walls, concrete is, landscape architect John Giger, a typical renovation includes sandblasting the pool and changing the color either with paint or stained concrete, then replacing the kind of tiles that line the inside of the pool at the water level. "There are hundreds of possibilities here, from concrete to stone," he says. "It's like a kitchen remodel, you can do just about anything with it."

Most older pools contain a polycarbonate concrete edging, which is called coping and is often characterized by an upward rolling bull nose. "That's nothing on earth that makes a pool look more dead,"

says Giger. He normally chisel out the concrete and replaces it with brick, bluestone, or granite, which he notes is the third most popular edging. For consistency, the same material can be used on the deck. Giger adds that, although renovations such as these might cost between \$12,000 and \$30,000 for an average-sized pool, "they don't cost anywhere near as much as starting over, and you'll still get something that looks like a brand-new pool."

To go beyond cosmetic changes, designers manipulate the shape of a pool by jackhammering out a straight wall to give it a bend or by excavating adjacent ground to create a heated spa. They might also add broad, shallow steps along an entire side for people who want to cool off without taking the full plunge. At that point, however, it's wise to look at the economics. "If you get into major reworking, you may not be saving much by preserving the old pool," says Giger. "You might be better off adding on the whole thing and starting over again. But for anything less ambitious, renovation is the way to go."

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Taking care of a pool once requires a pool key and a lot of chlorine, or a high tolerance for post-green water. Now, new technology has made pools more self-maintaining than ever with systems that can be automated.

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the details

BY EDMY FOXORANT

HAVE A SEAT

The quintessential lawn chair can take many forms—an Adirondack-style rocker, a romantic English garden settee, a slatted recliner—but when made of materials that evoke nature, it extends an invitation to reside outside for a while and decompress from workaday stress. To withstand the elements, furniture must be solidly constructed of stalwart materials. But weather-resistant doesn't have to mean chunky. From hand-crafted rusticity to sculpted elegance, these chairs display timeless style as they blend harmoniously into any outdoor setting.



A woven mesh-like seat deck shows from classic, light and airy teak chairs with rope-reinforced sides, slats, conforms to the spine like a soothing hammock.

the details

have a seat



Multiangular back adds relief on Adirondack-style lounge in pine.



Bamboo and bent branches form legs and back of a primitive perch.



An unpretentious and simply crafted tall chair weathers to a respectable gray.



Even an easy comeforger is sculpted aluminum frame.



Refined enough for indoor use, the seat doing their job endures sun and rain.



Glossy weather shields a painted mahogany rocker from summer squalls.



NORM SAYS

Redwood, cedar, and cypress are also on his short list because they resist rot and insects. "Think bark," says Norm. "Traditionally they have a lot of bark. If it can survive the sea, it's good enough for your backyard."

PHOTO: MICHAEL GOODMAN

NO SILLY



HOOD



ORNAMENTS

Were not a car company. Our vehicles make SUV's pants while it takes off road. SUV's pants intend to even get dirty. Obviously, that can't be said about the 1998 Isuzu Trooper. It has a double-welding, torsion-on-demand 4-wheel drive system. And it has ABS brakes that even work in low-slip snow. In other words, it's the kind of SUV a company makes up when they can't waste time thinking about cars.



ISUZU

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Rustic Romance

Best yellow trees denote the happy-shaped silhouettes of two club chairs. Each naturally finished piece has its own down-to-earth personality—the smoothness of mass-produced lawn furniture—and makes a porch all the more welcoming, even. Despite the ubiquity of plastic and aluminum outdoor furniture, an armchair's handcrafted look of hickory branches proves that the pioneer spirit can be eternally chic. Colored on corner cushions from the 1930s that have a boxy top on the back leg identify the chair's place of origin: "Mammoth, Ind."



Cedar Celebration Ten years ago, when former advertising executive Marvin Levin needed kitchen cabinets for his retreat in Woodstock, New York, he called on local craftsmen Bob O'Leary, right. Sheding a love for the eastern red cedar that grows throughout the Catskills, they began a business producing rustic outdoor furniture, eventually making plans for historic Hudson River sites and Olney Mills. "In contrast of 19th-century English and European designs, the chairs are not only picturesque but also strong," O'Leary says. "They're built—so they are solid!"



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LETTER

From This Old House

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

The first day of shooting a new season of *The Old House*—the inaugural episode of which airs in September on PBS—is a nerve-riddled. We're usually still looking out ways, clearing from one location to another to cover a variety of segments, and getting each scene just right means more rehearsal than usual. Inevitably, executive producer and director Russ Morash grows frustrated enough to bark, "You're killing me, fellow!" And so it goes.

This time, however, we had the added pressure of a fresh face on the set: *The Old House* magazine's new editor in chief, Donna Kaplan. Here is the delicate task of combining the wisdom of *The Old House*, the TV show, with the magazine you're holding—a job made all the trickier by our method of production, which we call "journalism adventures." Unlike most television production, we use a very small crew, travel with minimal equipment, and keep making, script, teleprompter, and cue cards—all in an effort to follow the phone action as faithfully as possible.

Communication among us is a lot like the form of mutually understood gestures, nods, grins, raised eyebrows, and cryptic expressions. Watching us does not let a lot like watching golf—knowing if you're a golfer but otherwise often losing.

Donna, however, seemed as at home around the set as Tiger Woods at Augusta National. No doubt that's due in part to her career path, which is typical for a magazine editor. Her first job out of Cornell University was producing documentaries about the revitalization of historic towns, including the well-known and winning competition of Fall River and New Bedford, Massachusetts. Then, she moved locations and condensed film production that ranged from commercials to Children's Television Workshop programs. In 1996, she jumped to magazines, eventually becoming senior editor of design, art, and collecting at *Metropolitan Home*. After working to design covers for *Food & Wine*, and as editor in chief of *Cosmo*, *Vogue*, *Teen*, and *Country Journal*, she took what some have called "The Old House" as her new mission. "Especially the idea of giving new life to old things."

Keeping the past alive while improving on it is what *The Old House* is all about. The mission of combining the best of traditional craftsmanship with new technology is as important today as it was when Russ started the show in 1977—only today we have the advantage of telling our stories in print as well as on the small screen. Both media have their limitations and possibilities. What makes a good television segment does not necessarily work as a magazine article and vice versa. For the show and the magazine have the same goal: to make you feel like you're part of the adventure—and part of the family.

So from all of us at *The Old House*: Welcome aboard, Donna. You'll be happy to know that after "You're killing me, fellow," Russ has another favorite expression you might find useful: "Have some fun with it!"—Steve Thomas



The Old House host Steve Thomas and executive producer Russ Morash talk shop with *TOH* magazine's new editor in chief, Donna Kaplan.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE YETKINS

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La Dolce Vita, KEY WEST STYLE

A sleek Italian kitchen is the key to Michael Miller's dream cottage.

BY JOSEPH D'AGNESE PHOTOGRAPHY BY PASCAL BLANCQ

Illustration: John Mele and Mike Speer unpack a kitchen in a box.



The morning sun blazed down on Key West, Florida, as Michael Miller surveyed his cluttered back porch. For weeks the porch had served as a staging area for the renovation of Miller's 19th-century conch cottage, *This Old House's* winter project house. But on this day, the table saw, trash cans, sawhorses, and toolboxes had been shunted aside to make room for Miller's new kitchen. Or, more precisely, 25 cardboard boxes containing parts for 18 Italian-made modular components—assembly required. Miller shook his head, relieved that he didn't have to take this on. John Mele and Mike Speer, two

With the black granite on their party list, Michael Miller and Margaret supervises, makes a visit to celebrate the new kitchen.



"Italians design kitchens as furniture that lives with them when they move," says Steve Thorpe.



workers dispatched from the manufacturer's Maschinen showroom, were already unpacking their tools and assembling their tape measures. "I guess you guys will figure it out," Miller said.

Key West is an island, which means that everything—from pickles to party knives—is floated, flown, or driven in from someplace else. Yet sailing an entire kitchen across the Atlantic is unusual even for the Coach Republic. But paying through a European kitchen catalog, Miller and his wife, artist and retail consultant Helen Colley, were inspired by the combination of cherrywood veneer, stainless steel, and glass or heavy clear chromastar the company's wares. The worn but ultra-archaic look reduced that questionable Italian sensibility—in dollar rate (the good life)—and seemed like a perfect fit for this historic, laid-back tip of Florida.

"Kitchens in Key West tend to be quite informal," says Miller. "In many houses the kitchen's in the living room separated only by a counter." When Miller and Colley bought their property, they knew they wanted to get rid of the open kitchen because it blocked the view of the back-porch. There was a more practical reason as well. "It seemed an enclosed but then because I didn't want to be able to see dirty dishes from the living room," says Colley.

To achieve her goal, the couple converted a side porch into a galley-shaped space, complete with a casement window over the sink. French doors leading onto the back porch, and racks for

Helen Colley, flanked by kitchen installers Mike Spurr and John Mide, inspects the spacing for the hood and also the placement of the cabinets before they're hung.





Although it's not evident when the kitchen is in its closed state, the high-end steel with brushed metal finish is the key to the look. The 1997 line for even more of the same design.

"High-quality veneer conserves resources," says Norm Abram. "You can get away without using solid wood."

major appliances. They also closed up a porch on the other side of the house in order to create a dining area. A lantern-enclosed great room took up the rest.

With the rough spaces carved out, it was time to fit the kitchen. As Mohr and Miller pulled a cabinet with frosted glass drawers out of a box, Colley laughed approvingly. "Wow," she said. "It is beautiful. What do you think, blue-gray?" The couple's honey-colored German shepherd Oliver sniffed and then licked the glass. Mohr smiled away the doubt. "Oh, well," said Colley. "At least glass is easy to clean."

Under the cabinet's breakfast facade was a carefully engineered system of hardware. Instead of being screwed into the wall, the upper units hung on a stainless-steel track that was then turned on a leveling device mounted inside. Lower cabinets were supported by legs that can be adjusted up or down in tiny increments. To fit heart Steve Thomas was especially nice: with the way the drawers from can be removed for easy cleaning and with the drawers' hidden gliding system. No one ever said not doing things right.

The company's Italian designers profit themselves on existing styles, all exact kitchens in six basic styles. Although the components are modular, they can be custom-fitted to specific dimensions. Whereas Italians tend to respect the conceptual integrity behind a particular line and wouldn't dream of mixing one style with another, Americans think nothing of combining their individuality by ordering elements a la carte and mixing. Different looks Colley and Miller want no exception, choosing cherrywood drawers from one line, frosted glass drawers from another, and thick, stain-resistant-wood sculptural handles from yet another. They added semi-gloss windows, a coral granite countertop, and a floor composed of black granite tiles.

"Even though we have a traditional home, we thought this blend of styles was the right way to go," says Miller. "I thought, 'This is just good art.'"

And highly functional, too. The kitchen would make it easy to whip up a feast of locally caught dolphins (the fish, not Pippin) and carry the food out to guests on the back porch. When an outdoor meal would wait, he'd enjoy using the kitchen's built-in sink. With a 410-foot-wide side, the kitchen would allow all three of them to pull together a dinner without feeling cramped.

Of course, Colley and Miller had to create their apartment's wonderful space and high style with vision of design in mind. During construction, the couple camped out on the second floor—two kitchens and two bedrooms. Occasionally they grabbed something to microwave out of a refrigerator in

room. Mohr inserts the last cherry-wood drawer before taping the work area with a stainless-steel counter. From the glass-fronted drawers she pulled out Colley to order the kitchen from Italy.



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"Even though we have a traditional house, I thought, 'This is just good art,' says Michael Miller.



Colley combined the old with the new, joined porcelain, brass and the other with a contemporary chrome sprayer to reflect the house's mixture of old and new.

the downtown hallway. More often, they eat out, sometimes combining dinner with a quick bar. Two blocks away, in the neighborhood laundry, Dade 'n' Soda, where patrons dump their clothes in the wash and relax with a beer and a little something to eat.

A working teacher and the cosmic lifestyle. But it wouldn't be easy getting there. Achieving the look of the catalog required the same precision as installing conventional cabinetry. Maybe not. The intricate part was making sure that all the cabinets were perfectly aligned. Along the way, the steel construction glitches popped up. On the kitchen's west wall, the niche was 107 inches wide. Mike and Spoor needed 164. Minutes. Soon, carpenters arrived on unusual detours. Oh, can you guys move three walls back an inch? As traditions crumbled, plasterboard and the red down studs, Mike and Spoor tackled the east wall. The cabinets and the plans were in confusion, the tension thick and uncomfortable in inches. Before long, the men were spewing more conversations, growing wilder, more strong, red drinking their heads. Make the sound, and the scene resembled a buzzing arena as the justice center.

The noise continued for six days. Then the kitchen was finished. And planning. Swing on the back porch, Colley mixed a few favorite dishes she and Miller couldn't wait to prepare. Cold and hot soups. Curry salad. Fresh fish grilled on the new cooking. Rack of lamb. Potatoes. Coming from their kitchen, pasta was bound to be delicious. ■

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La Dolce Vita, MADE IN ITALY

Where the Key West Kitchen Comes From

Y

ou want see this machine?" yells Luca Spinelli, frantically waving his hand, inside his family's highly automated furniture factory in northern Italy. "It's very cool. Watch!"

A 3-by-12-foot piece of medium density fiberboard (MDF) rolls down conveyers, straight toward Spinelli. As it proceeds, its left edge is neatly unrolled web glue, covered with a cherrywood veneer strip, and sealed with heat from a bludgeoning hot lung. Just as it reaches the end of the line, the board is spun around and fed through the machine in the other direction. This time, a 1/8-inch laminar thick veneer strip is applied to its other edge. And po, it's very cool.

Welcome to industrial modern—the modern factory that made the kitchens in The Old House's greatest hit, *Key West*, Florida. From the outside, the factory—designed by Venetian-trained architect Paolo Piva, known for big furniture—could be mistaken for a modern art museum. Except the cavernous space houses small human-controlled machines and workers clad in green lab coats create not only kitchens but also elegant closets and furniture. Production here is not unlike that in other MDF factories around the world. But this stuff can't be used for discount stores. There are real steps of cherry, birch, maple, and walnut the machines are applying—not photo-laminates. The result: high-end furniture that looks like it's solid wood.

For over a century, Milanese families forged the best of the top-rebelled in "La Biennale," as the region of Lombardy province is referred to informally. They patronized chair makers, or *carosai*, who transformed leather from local farms into lovely pieces. The tradition continues to this day. When Spinelli's grandfather and great uncle founded the firm back in 1942, they crafted Chippendale-style chairs. Today, his company—most its competitors that dot the hilly landscape—have transformed Biennale into one of the three major furniture-making regions in Italy.

Everything starts with a pencil in the hands of designers. Many are Italian architects who adhere strictly to the modern Milanese style: dark, functional, simple—and influential. "Typical customers, say restaurant manager Vittorio Corbelli, are sophisticated people who can't be fooled. "It's Italy today, young couples who are just starting out don't have much space," he says. "They need pieces that do a lot. And they want it to look simple."

In the factory, descendants of the original *carosai* use computers, but their knowledge of wood and furniture use, and their pride is most palpable. "When I was younger I used to build furniture by hand," says 60-year-old Giuseppe Tassinari. "It took a lot of time but now that I'm older, I want to do something less strenuous." With that, he slips on a pair of crisp white gloves, selects a square of 220-grit sandpaper, and caresses along the edges of a piece of furniture. Later, someone else has to describe his job. "Some designers," he explains. "I'm an artisan."—Joseph D'Agnese



At a factory in Biennale, Italy, a worker dry-cuts a chair's maker's not one potential competitor to produce sheets of cherrywood-veneer fiberboard.



An Italian designed kitchen consists of modular elements that stand out a variety of materials and streamlined style for efficiency.



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The right windows give a house strong character and distinctive style

G R E A T P A N E S

A window's most important functional element may be the glass, but it's the least important design feature, because it disappears. What really distinguishes a window is its shape, size, and construction—all of which determine its appearance from a given house angle. A Greek Revival, for instance, requires tall, double or triple-hung sashes; a Prairie-style should have horizontal bands of

elements—not about anything else would look wrong. But it's different in the T.O.H. Dennis House in Wilton, Connecticut, where a rambling two-story-looking is though it gives addition by addition onto the design—downside is wide variety of windows.

"Single Style is really a mix of styles: Queen Anne, Colonial, Craftsman," says Gary Brewer, project architect for the Robert A. M.

Serra designed Dream House. "It's the most of architecture." The goal, he says, is for all the elements—including several kinds of windows—to create an informal, breezy, whimsical look. Choosing the right window, he adds, whether it's a complicated house like the one in Wilton or for a modest renovation, is one of the most challenging steps in the design process. "There are many things to think

about," Brewer says. He starts by developing a floor plan for each room because, he says, the placement of chairs, tables, beds, and other pieces affects all the sill heights and window sizes and locations. He also considers the sun, the view it affords, the owner's preferences, the exact position in each season, and whether there's a covered porch or wide overhang outside. Appointments is one of the last things

BY JACK McCLINTOCK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON SCHMIDT

through windows, not at them," says Brewer. "People think, 'You look so thick about it, it's not there.' You know better than the opposite is true. Windows—doors, screens, soffits, awnings, shutters and all—are crucial to the success of a house's exterior and interior design.

The Dream House's mix of windows and glass-paned doors includes an abundance of double-hung units—six over-overs and six over-unders, eight-over-eights, four-over-fours, and some with double-hung panes—a few fixed oval windows with speckled and weblike finishes, arched Palladian windows flanked by ornamental columns, and several 10- and 12-pane French doors, some topped by transoms. They look almost randomly placed, but there's a reason behind every choice Brewer and Stone made.

The most appealing view from the house is to the south, down the slope to the meadow, which is why the sun porch, the living room, and dining room all face that way. Each of those rooms is compacted, and every angled corner adds an other factor in which to mount a double-hung one over one. The north side of the wing, which faces the circular driveway, features the same style. But at the same time, the windows change, becoming expansive, showy, diamond-glass panes that flank the front door and fulfill another function: catching the eye and leading a greater sense of luxury—by no one part of the house over another.

Upstairs, in the master bedroom and bath, more sun over-overs look in simple light and serve as important design elements, set in a



ABOVE: Fortunately for carpenter Phil Whipple, heavy rain can be removed to see the window frame installation. After fastening the frames, Whipple replaces the sash in just minutes.



STOPPING WIND AND WEATHER

"A new window is only as good as its installation," says Ted M. Anderson, Tom Elin. "We can't just take the window out of the box and slip it into the opening." Without the proper preparation and fastening technique, a window stands vulnerable to its chief enemy—water—and the ensuing rot and mold. But following guidelines will only add a few steps to an installation, says Elin, while extending a window's life by decades. "Two hundred years from now, as the body will be glad you did it right," he says, here they come to:

- Paint the window frame and the rough framing with an oil-based primer.
- Staple a 3-inch-wide strip of 1/2-inch paper or fiber-reinforced polyethylene to the exterior sheathing around the opening.
- Put the frame into the opening, and make sure it's square, level, and plumb.
- Fasten the sash to make sure they fit snugly up and down the frame. If they don't, re-square the frame.
- Use waterproof screws—not nails—to fasten the window frame to the house's studs, and sill.
- Install an air-barrier, or a vapor cap, along the top of the window; don't rely on caulk.
- Caulk the joint where the frame meets the sheathing inside, caulk the gap between the frame and rough framing for stop air leakage.

straightforward, and useful, while new beautiful restoration is found in houses, here's why the Viceroy, Midwestern, and a Shingle Style. The choice isn't always easy, Brewer says, but when it's right, wherever the style of the house, there's nothing like the perfect set of windows to improve your view of the world. ■

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Dressing Up a Dull Facade

"It has with a roof on it, and double-hung windows." That was architect Gary Brewer's assessment of the plain-faced Colonial shown below. His challenge: Use new windows and other elements to create two very different, decidedly attractive facades and give the house character and curb appeal. "It has simple bones and no detail, but you could still turn it into something."



In one of Brewer's assessments, he replaced the first floor's mean little windows with wider, taller six-over-six double-hungs, setting them over pointed wood panels to increase their apparent size and adding shutters for color, texture,

and charm. For greater appeal, he gut window boxes upstairs and changed the garage doors. To cap the facade and tie it together, a white-painted black-wood trim above the second-floor windows just below the roof. But the facade still lacked focus, so Brewer created an entry porch with a pair of columns, an arched pediment, and built-in benches. The elegant entryway casts the new windows suddenly into the background but still allows everything to work together to create architectural distinction.

Brewer applied the same principle in his second, less expensive version of the same house, designing a more modest entryway embellished with pilasters and a fanlight. He arranged the first-floor windows in groups on either side of the doorway, such a trio of double-hungs that together visually with a wrap-around ceiling and matching railings between each unit. Windows needn't stand alone, says Brewer, and look better in groups. And indoors, double- and high-wide window groups deliver another benefit: much more light.

Bigger windows—and more of them—embellished with shutters, flower boxes, raised panels, and a classic entry porch with benches and columns offer one way to enliven a drab house.



Less ambitious but no less effective is a makeover that relies on two trice of double-hungs on the first floor and on dressing up the doorway with a fanlight and fancy trim.

Sometimes you forget the milk.
Sometimes you forget the bread.
Sometimes you forget the store altogether.



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*MSRP. Excludes destination, taxes, title, and license.

Even before the last attendees and doors were installed, Dream House builder Walter Crowell had the heat on day and night. We needed to dry out this very wet house, or else the Peter Stone couldn't do his job. Fresh lumber strikes as it leaves mills, which can create a nightmare of cracked boards for a finisher when they go on early.

When the wood was dry enough, Greene's crew hastily put up some 25 tons of 7/4-inch gypsum board. Then the men started a whirlwind of nailing, taping, and sanding. Once again, the Great House was transformed, its ruddy lumber hidden forever behind gray-white panels that covered the true shape of each room.

As the snowbrokers finish their work, Carlos Silva, husband of four children, stands in the dining room, sharpening his pencil to a very fine point. Silva and his son, Gabriel, work in a zero-interest inn. Between the planks they lay, there can be no gaps, only tight seams, and the Silvas have done just that, covering all but the perimeter of the eight-sided room with white oak lath.

More is on the tough part, the berries. It's a traditional method—slices of oak, oiled with fruit-wood strips of bark, are used to press each berry into a cone. Because, at each of the eight corners, Carles must determine the precise cutting angle, he draws time out (like with his eye-sharp pencil), adjusts his chop saw, slices through a piece of oak and tests the fit. When it's right, the ends hold tightly and almost disappear. "Look nice!" Mike says a winner. But he barely needs a reply, for in his smile he clearly knows the answer.

—Mike Carles

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These walls, however, are not all that they seem. The main benefit of the Omega House is that no remodeling projects will quietly and efficiently deliver you-counters, cabinets, kitchen walls and ceilings, a check kitchen of stainless steel, hot hot stoves, and hot gas in summer. And how these some of the top quality and materials measure the new day, and who better walls.

ROCKIN' ALL DAY LONG



It's a little bit out of focus, but the person is working on a wooden structure, possibly a boat hull. The person is wearing a dark shirt and is focused on the task. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the wooden structure.

F L O O R E H O W



19. 1117176: Stamp of *crabbed* *front* *nailed* *into* *a* *through* *to* *be* *in* *Case* *1* *file* *is* *hanks* *the* *first* *under* *which* *the* *pages* *are* *the* *only* *not* *steps* 1277. Carlos can be *in* *fact* *to* *make* *the* *octagon* *that* *shows* *the* *case's* *shape* *arrow*. After each rule and arrow in find the right side, Carlos says is a perfectly good border step.

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The addition of two sets of French doors and a deck to the left of the house gave Molly and Leon Banowetz the ability to thoroughly enjoy their backyard and pool.

FRENCH connections

Outdoor Living Gets Twice as Nice
with New Double Doors and a Deck

BY ROMY POKORNY PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL MANUEL

Advertising can be a glamorous business, but Molly and Leon Banowetz know its downside. As owners of a graphic design firm in Dallas, Texas, they tolerate long hours, demanding clients, and high-pressure deadlines to produce logos, ads, and TV spots. So when the workday's done, they seek refuge in their house. It's their escape hatch, their place to spread out, kick back, and have fun.

When they bought the 1930 brick-and-clapboard Colonial four years ago, after a casual two-month search, it was a big step up from the

"We had this beautiful view of the pool, but getting to it wasn't easy."

—LEON BANOWETZ



BEFORE



All glass windows in the dining room, which offered panoramic views of the backyard, had no way to enjoy the morning breeze. And since from the outside, above, the glass sheets looked like a gaping hole in the wall.



cramped 1950s ranch house they had been living in. There were residents had 3,000 square feet—plenty of room for their own dogs, cats, and collections of plants, wreaths, window treatments, and glassware. It had a great location in the heart of Lakewood, near the beach. And, best of all, it had a backyard with a swimming pool where they could hang out, cook out, and entertain. Says Molly, "We stopped a few inches into the dining room, took one look at the pool and said, 'This is it. This is the perfect house.'"

But a short time after they bought it, some less-than-perfect features came to light. For one thing, two badly screened windows stuck out inside the kitchen window, interfering with the view and blocking the backyard with access. To get from the kitchen to the small back deck at the opposite end of the house, the couple had to go through the dining room, living room, and entrance. And the dining room was dominated by a picture window with a beautiful view of the pool, but offered no way to get there. Worst of all, the kitchen storm door opened onto a narrow, concrete back stoop. Every time they entered in an onslaught of groceries or took trays of food out to the pool, they were fumbling awkwardly with the screen door.

Instantly conceived a solution: Build a new deck and replace the kitchen and dining room windows with French doors. "I really wanted to open up the back of this house and also make it more functional," he says. For Molly, though, the need to revamp wasn't so obvious. "I was afraid a deck would look too new," she admits. She was also reluctant to lose any more green space, since the pool already takes up much of the yard. But once her husband started sketching out his dream, Molly agreed to go ahead.

After moving the air-conditioning compressors to the side of the house, the Banowetzes turned to Douglas Travis to install the doors. Travis, a Dallas contractor known for his high-quality work on traditional houses, targeted carpenters Jerry Joyner and Keith Travis to do the door installation and master Johnny Garcia to remove and replace the brick. Over the course of four weeks, Joyner and Travis methodically took out the old windows, cut the wall down to where the deck would be, and bolted an angle iron beam to the header to support the brick. They put a three-inch sandwich on either side of the rough opening, then obtained the jamb opening. The doors themselves were brought in a day. While the carpenters applied the made trim, Garcia removed the brick back to the exterior walling. When all the painting and trim work was done, the new window opening was tucked to the jamb and the threshold level of all, later had the back stoop slugs removed to underneath.

"In a good renovation, you shouldn't be able to tell where the old doors and the new doors," Travis says. "The key to this job was in making the doors and treating them out so they would look like they'd been there all along." Because of their doors' southern exposure, the doors needed some form of shelter. "French doors on a house with no roof overhang will wear out fast from sun and rain," Travis says. "I suggested that they put in an awning, unless they want to be replacing constantly."

With the doors in place and the stoop gone, Leon asked his brother-in-law to help him build the new deck. "I brought him a plan table and asked him to come down from Iowa to help me," Leon says. Steve, an experienced builder, ordered the pressure-treated lumber and, in the summer of 1996, the brothers went to work. "The hardest part of the job was working in the blazing heat," Leon says. "We'd start at seven in the morning, pump in the pool in the afternoon to cool off, then quit around eight p.m. and have a cold beer and some laughs."

But when the work was done five days later, Leon wasn't satisfied. "Suddenly

With the windows gone and the rough opening framed, carpenter Jerry Garcia prepares to put in the new door jamb.



After removing the mortar joints with the chisel and saw, master Johnny Garcia bolts over the brick with a chord.



For the doors to fit snugly onto the pool, Steve asked Leon to check level and plumb before setting in a place.





Black strips of building felt strip water from getting between the sheathing and the framing.



Once the doors are in, new bricks are returned over the exposed sheathing and sill.



Five days after the started, Tom takes one more hot swing before the hot air is reached.

the old deck looked really bad," he says. "I suggested to Steve that we treat-ise it, and he looked at me like I was crazy." All the same, the two of them went ahead and spent an entire week paying off the old deck boards and screw- ing in fresh ones. After they replaced the railings and balustrade, the original deck blended in seamlessly.

The last real test of decks and doors came this fall when the Boreavestians hosted a charity fund for 350 people. "A lot of people were standing on the new deck, looking down at the pool," says Lene. "Other guests were walking around in the yard eating, peeing, and drinking margaritas. Everyone seemed to be out of the house early. It was a lot of fun."

"This was a great investment," Lene says, reflecting on his \$32,000 remodel. "It has totally changed the way we live. We eat outside more, and on weekends, if it's nice, we leave the doors open all day. Now the first thing visitors want to do is walk right into the backyard."

And the skeptical Molly? "I love it," she says with a grin. ■

TOM SILVA TALKS FRENCH (DOORS, THAT IS)

After installing a few hundred French doors over the years, this old house contractor Tom Silva knows how to make the process easier and the outcome better. Here's how he does it:

- When underlating any soil spouting, he always hunk up or replaces the header bearing the weight of the soil above.
- Tom takes care to frame the rough opening plumb and level, which helps speed the installation of the door jamb. In general, Tom positions the framing on 1½-2 inches wider and about 2½ inches higher than the door size. That leaves him enough wiggle room to adjust the jamb.
- Doors won't fit in a jamb that's rotted (but it squares). To correct rotting, Tom measures diagonally from corner to corner and moves the jamb until both diagonals are the same length.
- Doors won't swing right if a jamb is out of plumb or twisted. A plumb bob or level will find plumb, but to prevent twist, all four corners are four inches and some string. He takes a half inch each corner and makes a half "X" across the opening with the string. Then, after one jamb is plumbed, he simply adjusts the opposite jamb until the strings just touch, which indicates both doors will be on the same plane.
- Once the jamb is set, shims hold it tight to the framing. Five pieces form at each large location and at the top and bottom of the side jambs. But he never fastens shims at the center of the head jamb. If he did, and the header sagged even slightly, the doors would bind. Instead, he backs the head jamb with temporary shims and nails the shims to the header, taking care to miss the shims. Then he knocks the shims out. Now if the header ever droops, the jamb can be made level again by tapping the nails with a hammer.

- Weatherproofing starts as soon as the rough opening is framed and proceeds with each step of installation. Before the jamb goes in, Tom lays a self-sealing rubber or bitumen sheet across the bottom of the rough opening and runs it 2 inches up the stile. And before the siding goes on, he nails 1-inch strips of 15- or 30-pound builder's felt (or lead) over the exposed studs and sheathing, the same metal flashing over the outside rim to keep water from sneaking in.
- Silenced latex caulk, applied before the siding is installed, seals the door's perimeter. Tom also puts a bead of polyurethane or butyl rubber between the threshold, to block any water that might creep under it.



"The remodel has totally changed the way we live. We eat outside more, and visitors want to walk right into the backyard."

—LENE BANOWETZ



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— TOM SILVA'S ESSENTIALS —

Even as a youth, T.O.H. contractor Tom Silva had a taste for tools—his father's. While Dad was off building houses, Tom prowled the shop and helped himself. "First, I took a screwdriver, then a chisel," he says. "My father couldn't understand where all his tools were going, until one day he saw my toolbox, stuffed." Forty years later, Tom is still collecting tools, except now he pays for them. "There's always something I want to pick up," Tom says. "To tell you the truth, that's half the fun of my job."

Tom's ever-growing trove, which now fills four trucks, a shop, a trailer, a garage, and part of his basement, is beyond most people's needs, so we asked him to pick just the essentials: the tools a home owner should have for basic repairs and improvements. Tom's kit consists of simple, versatile hand and power tools that are readily available at hardware stores



and home centers. And they won't bust the budget if, like Tom, you begin with the basics and add piecemeal, as new projects crop up. But like Tom, you may find it hard to stop. "Sometimes I think I have everything I need," Tom says, "but I never do."

BY CURTIS RIST STILL-LIFES BY ERIC PIASECKI

His 4,000 workmen who built the bridge, in addition, a good craftsman or professional known in import Asia of having a wide knowledge of the bridge and how to build it. "Buy the best," says the "Buy the Best" slogan, "Buy the Best" slogan.



TOM'S TOP FORTY

- 3) Three-piece chain nut (3, 5, 7, and 9-link)
- 4) 2-foot low clamp
- 5) Six-yards overhead saw
- 6) Hackaxe
- 7) Crow's foot
- 8) 14-inch pipe wrench
- 9) Five-screw/foot cut, Phillips and straight slots
- 10) Utility knife
- 11) Wire stripper
- 12) 6-foot lead
- 13) Floodlight
- 14) Concrete test-caster
- 15) Folding shovel
- 16) Saw driver set
- 17) 270-inch circular saw
- 18) 60-inch 12-gauge extension cord
- 19) Cell's power
- 20) Dig bar
- 21) Spring clamps
- 22) Bench plate
- 23) Pipe clamp
- 24) Motor-sump pump
- 25) 6-inch adjustable wrench
- 26) Lineman's pliers
- 27) Locking pliers
- 28) Hand-saw pliers
- 29) Framing square
- 30) Safety gear: gloves, earplugs, anti-fall mask
- 31) 90-inch combination square
- 32) 16-inch variable-speed reversible drill
- 33) Leather belt kit
- 34) 80-foot tape measure
- 35) Torque level
- 36) Allen wrench set
- 37) Nail sets
- 38) 96-inch beamer
- 39) Low-angle block plane
- 40) 90/100-watt probe's light
- 41) 40-piece socket-wrench set
- 42) Check list with check (in yellow notebook)

— C O R D L E S S C U T T E R S —

When Tom Silva climbs a ladder to cut siding and trim, the last thing he wants is a cord to snag, slice, or trip over. "I feel a lot better up there with a cordless saw," he says. That's quite a change. Cordless saws never had enough oomph for Tom's taste; now he owns three. They are part of a new generation of battery-powered tools—including hedge trimmers, planers, even chain saws—muscling into the domain of their corded and gas-powered brethren. "We're trying to cut the cord on everything," says Jim Griffin of Makita USA. Compared to the first cordless crop, these tools have more efficient motors, faster chargers (waiting time is an hour or less), and bigger, higher-voltage batteries. Even so, Tom hasn't put away his corded saws yet: Cordless-saw blades are too thin to handle stacks of framing lumber, and even the biggest battery pack runs down eventually. That's why Tom always keeps an extra one in the charger. "When a battery dies, I just slip in the spare."

BY CURTIS RIST STILL LIVES BY ERIC PIASECKI



Photo: Rick H. / AP Photo

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FORD COUNTRY





Arise: Their 14th days grown, but the owners of a house that on South Madison still keep their eyes racing. Says son, "It's for the neighborhood kids, we know them all." says son. The house has the open space in front and into an expansive baseball field.



Most have arrived in the Heights due to various reasons, including the fact that the city was a "hot" area of interest in the 1950s.



Adding the roof, doors and windows has been a lot of work for the owners.



Arise: David Johnson and his son, Mike, live a few blocks away from the Heights but are coming here to take advantage of the amenities. Says son, "It's for the neighborhood kids, we know them all." says son. The house has the open space in front and into an expansive baseball field.



Sixteen looking for interesting architecture and lush gardens drive slowly through Madison Heights, some barely reaching it miles per hour as they drift by a large Craftsman bungalow next to a tall Colonial Revival not far from a striking West Coast modern-style. Down to block after shady block of remarkable houses, they roll along with windows down, eyes faintly cranking over fallen cypress leaves. Residents glance up occasionally from their weekend rest or from their porch parties, knowing by the immaculate pantheon of drivers and passengers turning their heads this way and that. People in Madison Heights are used to the attention.

The Heights has long attracted house gardeners, so here other neighborhoods in and around Pasadena. A home of 140,000 perched in the San Gabriel River valley just 12 freeway miles from Los Angeles, Pasadena may be the most lovely leafy city in America, and its good reason. Scattered chunks of its residential areas—most of them built in a freewheeling fashion in the early 1900s—were carefully exchanged and carefully well kept, making the Heights a rich portrait of California-era architecture.

"Pasadena is the second oldest town in Los Angeles County," says Bob Tyler, a Madison Avenue realtor for 33 years and a city councilman for two. "One little community goes ballistic when someone proposes a development here or even nearby that might change our way of life."

Outside Madison Heights' woodfired homes, there is a simple evidence of developments that would rattle Tyler and his neighbors: apartment houses. Many old houses have fallen to these multi-family monsters and, if developers had their way, the madonnas would never rest. But resistance from neighborhood and civic organizations has helped preserve much of Pasadena's architectural serenity.

Pride of place has long been the mine in Pasadena. When the city celebrated its famed New Year's Day Rose Parade in 1946, the wonder of roses blooming in mid-winter caught the attention of well-to-do Midwesterners and Easterners. Resort hotels floundered. Many visitors, including spouses William Wrigley Jr., David Geffen, and Henry Huntington, made it their winter home. In view of Pasadena's mild Mediterranean climate and historical and artistic as well as its rising at the foot of the snow-capped San Gabriel Mountains, they stayed, they built, and they pleased.

Many of the grandest houses went up on the heels of the Acropolis, and well-heeled owners embraced the straightforward elegance of the new Craftsman movement in house design. The work of local architects Charles and Henry Greene was a sensation, reportedly Charles Greene, now retired and now in a museum register with most of its original landmarks.

Middle class professionals could not settle in what was then Pasadena's rich side in more affordable neighborhoods like the Madison Heights, a mile or so south of the city center. Henry Hunt-

ington's sprawling big Red Cal Cal electric engine system topped them from town or down to South Pasadena or near to Montecito, Arroyo, Glendale, Claremont, and Cucamonga.

Plotted in 1903, the first 43 lots in the Heights sold quickly. Times were good in the years before and even during the Great War, and most of the neighborhood's first houses went up between 1909 and 1920. Eventually, surrounding homeowners and ranches gave way to about a thousand houses atop the plateau that gave the Heights its slight elevation and half of its name.

The area's picture perfect quietness had one idea behind it. Builders discovering that more affordable work gave the Heights rich appeal but no competitors. Pasadena Heights, a progressive group that represents local youth and has completed detailed surveys of Madison Heights, notes that almost every one of Pasadena's famed designers did work here, including Reginald Johnson, Wallace Nutt, Sylvester Marvinson, and others. Buehler, Estlin, Henshaw, Black, Hunt & Gray, Greene & Greene. Today these craftsmen have made the city beloved people with the film industry, with some houses commanding \$15,000 per the street line as well as poppets to outstanding buyers for putting up with the inconvenience. But, says Rose Tyler, a five-year resident and president of the Madison Heights Neighborhood Association, the downside is an invasion of equipment trucks, portable bathroom, and RV dumping rooms. Many neighbors are sick of it.

The ultimate, Heightsians themselves find that money-makers here is partly due to the Heights' compact lot. Most measure 30 to 40 feet wide and 90 to 130 feet deep and have the owner's regular evidence of vintage houses. Equally attractive are the houses that add a welcoming warmth to house fronts and give owners a way to enjoy the climate and had their neighbors. Like a napa photograph from long ago, some show even a nostalgic for a simple, more elegantly past that few could know but that—as a time of increasing isolation—drawn people in search of community. "We are the porch every day," says Jeff Ellis, who lives in a 1915 English-style bungalow on Alameda Street. "We're out there in the evening when everyone walks by."

The small cypress walk here, too, lately cutting across front yards to speed their deliveries. When the metallic step of a mailbox lid momentarily turns Henry Tyler's attention from his voi-



From page and chicken scanner from the sign of Gus's Bar-B-Q, a nearby eatery and parking place where the owner has been thick and rich for 12 years.

too, her expression will slight nod of the head say, "Right in time." She says outside to into a few hours from the porch of the 4,400 square-foot house she and Ted have owned since 1969. The house was built for Thibodeau and Caroline Jones in 1969. For the three hefty sum of \$7,200, and the Tybels are only the third owners. "Most of us have put down roots," she says. Community (the, sometimes held on the Tybels' big soccer-lit lawn, is a mix of 30- to 80 something homeowners. Easter egg hunts take over an entire street's worth of gardens. "For Sale" signs are rare. "We don't get a lot of list signs," says local real estate agent Lou Gordon. One Madison estate luxury house on the market recently at \$770,000 and had seven bidders after the first day. Even as prices like that, buyers are often younger couples with kids who fully expect to drop another \$200,000 into a remodel.

But while the well-preserved houses, tidy lawns, and sense of community are the result of a persistent pride of both ownership and neighborhood, another of the Haggle's attributes—as relatively quiet streets, compared to the traffic screaming down nearby boulevards—comes from a fierce acronym. "We watchdog anything incoming traffic," says Thibodeau. "We helped start Ted Tyler because he loves here and we felt he'd be on our side. I think he's done a good job." A recent development plan to put shops and a seven-screen multiplex on the corner of Lake and California would have added 10,000 cars and truck trips a day through the Haggle, says Thibodeau. But the association and other civic groups used the city and won a major concession: elimination of the theater.

Thibodeau and many others don't believe in putting in the hours needed to keep the Haggle the way they found it. And their dedication may deepen that a more self-interest in preserving real estate value. "People are more here," says Ron as he walks south along



Madison. "Other parts of the city have magnificent houses, but you don't see people spilling out into their yards or walking across the street with a canister. But it happens here."

Two blocks away, a couple pushing a double stroller approaches. On a corner, a father and son stop their bikes, enjoying a good climbing time. And yet another slow-moving car takes the turn through the slanting late afternoon sunlight. The day days are peaceful time, in Madison Heights, where quality, watchability, and the end of its last century. ■

source: Encouraging better more than a quarter-century old, Madison Heights is about to become 124th President, which includes along Colorado Boulevard. The 124th The Four Oaks Pharmacy has been in business since 1978. ATOP (ATOP) 4, 207-acre historical garden filled with specimens and sculptures surrounds the museum library. Madison Heights, built in 1972.



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Paul Riley, who's a pro at
carving stone, will be
back for a goody
in Coconut Grove,
Florida (page 121). After
the stonecarver finishes
a job, some owners will
even find a "stonehead,"
a concrete lion, peering
out from a carefully
sculpted alcove.

SUBLIME STONE

Stone carver Paul Riley sculpts a coral rock landscape

BY JACK HOLLINCOCH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDRÉ SARANDOWSKI



Billy constructs the coral rock wall for a Miami estate one of the first signs of the powerful and stylish stone-masonry career that would culminate in the archway below.

"I feel like a little kid building a fort," says stonemason Josh Billig. He's crouching in a pool of Miami sunshine at the foot of a rambling old Mediterranean-Revival mansion's stone stairway, chipping away at a hunk of coral rock with a loosely held hatchet. Occasionally, he gazes out at Biscayne Bay, or up past the royal palms—he's a longtime bird-watcher—to observe an osprey skimming against the Monday or a flock of green parrots flying by. "I used to see old estates like this as a kid and think I'd have one someday." He chuckles at his early earnest, fitting a square into place. "This now I work on three every day and I probably spend more time on notes by working on them than if I lived in one."

Billig is wearing a hard hat and a T-shirt that bears the company name at Big Island ROCKERS. And he's talking. That is, repeating the design like man in Andrew did seven years ago in the 1922 Stone House at the historic Drexler Estate. Probably fewer than a dozen people do what Billig does for a living: turning coral or sand-castles—colored "coral rock" (which is actually a kind of limestone grout-as-castles) into solid, solid, lasting

structures. Black Bahamian craftsmen brought the technique to Florida decades ago, and some of the most charming homes at Coral Gables and Coconut Grove—the oldest, furthest neighbors of Miami—are built of coral rock. In the 1920s, workers built the soft stone with chains and sprayed them with concrete to make them look old and prettier: moss growth, thereby misleading down with ancient pedigree.

On the Drexler job, Billig, his master Garry Jetheloff, and their helpers on the rock pile—known to them as Black Beach—have just finished stacking up two stone men that carry chisels to which squared-off chunks of stone from a light-colored pattern. They moved on to the next, where Billig cut keyways quarried in Key Largo's that

been cut to reveal forehead and a muscle on its surface. On the wall beside the arch, Billig is laying a rough shroud of white mortar horizontally with wide, shallow random joints, trying to match the house's original, haphazard workmanship.

"It's not very pretty, but it's historically accurate," he says with a shrug. "One misconception is that, post here to discover the old architecture and then try to match it." He looks on and—scooped stone-mason like a loose pine.

For Billig, this is an unusual job. It's all summer work, and his true practice is long-lasting structural masonry—shaping white walls, window frames, stairways, waterfalls, pool borders, and arches of solid stone. Once, he built a handsome 2-foot-high wall that, through no fault of his, turned out to be 6 inches over a property line. "They put us to take it out and rebuild it, but we found it hard to break down our own wall," he says. He brought in dry bladders with heavy sledges but finally he had to resort to shattering it with jackhammers.

Billig's own world was split a split in 1974, when he was 16 and his 17-year-old sister Amy, disappointed from a Coconut Grove career cut, sent his mother searching desperately for her, poring newspaper ads that led her to rough-hewn and motorcycle gangs across America. But Amy was never found.

After Amy's disappearance, Josh dropped out of high school and became "more and more antisocial," he says. "My whole life was in disarray."

But he continued to attend Boy Scout meetings and go camping every month, earning 34 merit badges and becoming an Eagle Scout. "It's probably what kept me grounded," he says, and laughs. "The guys from that camp are now all doctors and lawyers. I see them and they say, 'Oh, wow, I wish I could do what you do.' And I know there's a mix of lawyers and architects in there. But I get to be out there"—he gestures at the palm trees and blue-green bay—"while they're inside under their fluorescent lights."

At 18, he was working as a computer's helper when his boss asked if anyone wanted to try building a wall out in front of the jobsite. As a boy Billig had dreamt of becoming a homebuilder, buying a plot of land and learning how to build, grow, and ripen everything by his hand. He thought, why not? It's a new skill for the homebuilder—and benefit for the rock pile. He learned to cut the soft stone the traditional way (with a wet or hand-cut) and how to construct a two-faced wall (interlocking with the rubble and mortar inside. Building a big pond. Paving down to the ground and asked for his phone number. He bought a truck and went into business doing concrete work.

But it was a good five years before he considered himself a stone mason. Now that he works on left feet. The people who hired him were rich and demanding: "on tight every 100 feet was high-grade people, and had to be there fast," he says. One of his first jobs was to erect a pair of columns with square cut stones and eight piers that were wide as the houses and tapered toward the top. "They came out perfect, as if a professional had made them. So I got a big head and the confidence to make my own style." That style, refined over the succeeding years, is a light-colored and a smooth-faced, different from the rough, weathered method of coral rock building but respectful of both it and the material. "In the old days, they used to lay tracks down from it. It was more a stacked look," Billig says. "We stand less up and show more face." He calls it "wetlook," because at the way the points spread to a colorful-like network.

Coral rock work is still a primitive trade. Occasionally, one big job like this, Billig was to do a stone wall with a spacing 20 inches apart like coral or diamond-shaped blocks, in a head-to-head pattern with a diamond blade. But usually, he cuts one like those of a wood carver, a heavy set to chop boulders into a variable



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contents of security, easy to pocket,
and hard to break, padlocks guard
what must be kept, and bar what
must be kept out. The word comes
from 15th-century England, a time
when tradesmen and farmers closed
goods-laden market baskets, called
pads or pads, with crude locks fash-
ioned of iron or brass—a stolen mine
was a useless thing.

The locks with loop shackles that
are still in use today first showed up in
the 18th century, a time when Euro-
pean craftsmen made what are still
believed as the highest examples of
artistic locksmithing. But there was
much more to these fancy locks than
just decoration. Many contained elab-
orate Irish or puzzle mechanisms that
could only be opened after hidden but-
tons, decorative elements, keyway
gates, and other seemingly innocuous
features were pushed, swung, slid, or
pressed, all in a particular sequence.

By the mid-1800s, the proliferation
of padlocks caused the pockets of their
owners to bulge with huge keys, some
as large that they required a folding
mechanism to reduce their bulk. But in
the 1860s, Linus Yale, Jr. invented the
clever, compact cylinder lock and, with
it, the small, flat key we still use.

Today, padlocks are starkly tech-
nical, their elegance displayed only in
exotic metalwork meant to resist brute
force and in complex mechanisms
designed to frustrate skillful pickers. As
they have for centuries, padlocks guard
our treasures and technology, our past,
and our secrets, keeping the unwanted
out of our lockers and sheds, away from
our bikes, and outside our gates. Sadly,
the need for discretion will never go
away. We must lock, or lose.

THE
POSTER



locks

BY PETER JENSEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC PIASECKI

THIS OLD LOCK

Their risks and scratches speak of a lifetime of steel service and occasional bottle. Their patina and heft, weariness and merrily give them value far greater than their original cost. Old locks, long retired, often come back as collectible antiques, sometimes fetching thousands of dollars at sales and auctions.

Prices are going up rapidly, says Bob Dix, a well-known collector and locksmith. Interest is rising in driving

the increase right now, but Dix, who was featured in *E.Q.'s An American Craftsmen* (March-April 1987), warns would-be collectors

that Internet auctions have a way of becoming a landing frenzy that overinflates prices. Meaningful values, he says, are best established at swap meets of serious collectors.

Keys always add value; they prove a lock works. But they aren't essential. "I'll half the price of a lock down by complaining that it doesn't have a matching key," says Dix. "For me, half the fun is making that key."

As with many categories of collectibles, taxes have entered the marketplace. "I had a lock and key supposedly from the Andersonville Confederate prison sent to me for appraisal," says Dix. "We're talking about a lock potentially worth thousands of dollars. It really looked good. The owner/collector only likes it on the key. Under a 50-power glass I could see metal marks—a beautiful job of trying to make a new thing look old."

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Brass flat key, c. 1830; and brass railroad switch-lock with chain, c. 1927; brass bullet-hole, c. 1950



It Hasp to be Good



If a hasp isn't made of heavy-duty metal and installed with long screws or bolts, it's one for the weak link in a locking system.

poorly installed hasp. While a lock can take a bullet, a hasp can succumb to a mere pry bar.

Hasps come in all sorts of configurations, which you can—and should—match to the door, gate, or lid you aim to secure. Whether it lies flat or turns one or two corners, a hasp should fit tight to fend off an attack. To bolster this potentially weak link, use only the hottest hardware and fasten it with long screws or, better still, through-bolts. For greater resistance to pry-offs, strengthen the back of the door with a block of wood or a metal plate.

Against a determined intruder, padlocks only buy time. With the right tools, a lock can be broken, cut or picked. But security experts agree that if a lock holds its own for more than 2½ minutes, a thief is likely to move on for fear of being discovered. Yet strong as padlocks are, they can be instantly compromised when paired with a vulnerable partner—a flimsy or

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HOUSE CALLS WITH STEVE
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Architects Architectural Woods, the Karl and Cassius Partnership, 14 Vanderhilt Rd., West Hartford, CT 06115; 860-519-5165. **Paints** Pittsburgh Paints, 1 PVC Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15273; 800-441-9695. **Plumbers** Waterworks, 70 Bucken Avenue, Danbury, CT 06810; 800-827-2120. **Tile** Ann Seals, 8128 N.W. 33rd Drive, Portland, OR 97211-2018; 503-287-8887.

ASK NORM
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Fireplace Waterbury-Went, American Energy Systems, Inc., Haverhill, MA, 800-495-3196. **Art** Art-Lite, Townsend Dales Manufacturing Co., Norwington, MD; 800-725-9335. **Metal Radiators** Radiators Monarch, Carlsbad, NJ; 800-507-5551; www.monarch.com. **Arco** Manufacturing Company, Cincinnati, OH; 800-343-7990; www.arcoinc.com. **Wooden Radiators** Radiators: Wooden Radiator Cabinet Co., Chicago, IL; 800-917-9110. **True Finish** Woodworking, Inc., Garden City, NY; 800-695-8090.

HENDING FENCES
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Welpole Woodworkers, Welpole, MA; 800-343-6948.

BEST CELLARS
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Wine accessories U-Line wine cooler storage, \$495, and Disc professional wine rack, \$149.95, from

Georgings & Wade, 800-782-9463; www.georgings.com. The Fine Wine Lovers, 888-330-6371. **Wine racks** Kelson Wine Storage Systems, Farmingdale, NY; 516-454-7800. **Glass** design DiDomeno Associates Architects, 694 10th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215; 718-788-2751. **Interior** design Goss Block Interiors, Brooklyn, NY; 718-832-6722.

RESCUING THE RANCH
pp. 57-60



OTD Projects Ljane Shelby, Norelle Ranger Scarsia, 20325 Rosemont Rd., Hixon, MT 59646; 406-626-5201. **Other**

Harrige Expeditions Jill Osborn, RET National Coordinator, 1249 S. Venable Way, Boise, Idaho 83709; 208-375-4162. **Peppers in Time**: Clearinghouse, Box 32345, Tucson, AZ 85733-1515; 800-281-9176. A newsmag, RET Traveler, has the program.

CLEAN MACHINE
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Insulator Jim Nigg, Central Vacuum, Annapolis, CO; 800-861-8001. **Systems** MD Manufacturing, Bakersfield, CA; 800-525-2855.

A SPLASH OF STYLE
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Pools Rock Pools, Orange, CA; 714-282-8285. **Natural Pools & Gardens**, Tucson, AZ; 520-325-2627. **Architects** Duo Dickinson, Madison, CT; 203-243-0435. **John Giger & Associates**, Greenwich, CT; 203-243-9403. **Robert A. N. Stern**, New York, NY; 212-967-1100.

THE DETAILS
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Task dining chair 9237, \$160, Switzerland, Dallas, TX; 800-717-8325. **Task chairs** G681906, \$950, Smith & Hawken; 800-776-3336. **Patio**

Underbar Alberto, \$119, House Depot Wine racks; \$2,350, Weathered, Rockland, ME; 800-458-6463. **Adirondack-style chair** Kama's-unipet, \$5,500, \$295, Summer Classics, Princeton, AL; 205-663-1688. **Melcher** \$1,275, Del Corno & Company, New York, NY; 212-688-5310. **Task garden chair** Resator 188A, \$438, Barlow Tyne, Moorestown, NJ; 800-413-7467. **Ranchwood** 23370, \$195, Seaden, Salt Lake City, UT; 800-402-2770. **Patio sea grass armchair** 2730 2006, \$899, Irons Jordan Collection, St. Monica, CA; 626-463-8971. **Chesley Table** G1679, \$215, Smith & Hawken. **Club chair** Willow with redwood finish, \$880, La Lure Collection, Milwaukee, WI; 414-263-3366. **Hickory armchair** Old Hickory

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